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ROBERT LINKLATER  
MAN, MISSIONER,  
AND PRIEST



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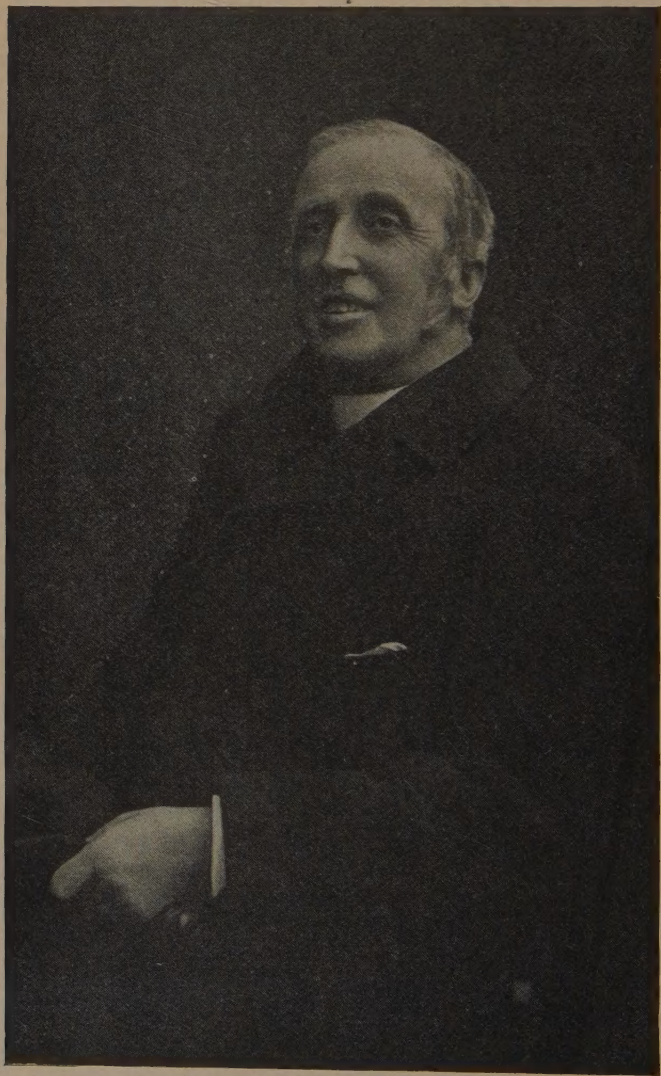
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ROBERT LINKLATER

"FEAR not to build thine eyrie in the heights  
Where golden splendours stay,  
And trust thyself unto thine inmost soul,  
In simple faith alway,  
And GOD will make divinely real,  
The highest form of thine ideal."





PREBENDARY LINKLATER, D.D.  
Vicar of Stroud Green

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# ROBERT LINKLATER

MAN, MISSIONER, AND PRIEST

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF AN

IDEAL CATHOLIC

WITH FOREWORDS BY

THE BISHOP OF LONDON

AND THE

ARCHDEACON OF WINCHESTER

"As the moon brightens round her the clouds of the night,  
So he, where he stands, is a centre of light."

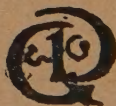
WORDSWORTH.

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1916

DEDICATED TO MY FRIEND

HIS DEAR WIFE

M. C. L.,

WITH TENDER SYMPATHY, IN LOVING MEMORY.

---

“ . . . What an empire is this !  
The weary have life, and the hungry have bliss,  
The mourner is cheered, and the anxious have rest,  
And the guilt-burdened soul is no longer opprest.”  
WORDSWORTH.



FOREWORDS BY  
THE BISHOP OF LONDON AND  
THE ARCHDEACON OF WINCHESTER

DOCTOR LINKLATER did such devoted work in North London for so many years that I cannot refuse to write a few lines in this record of his life and work. When I was an undergraduate at Oxford I well remember his stirring appeal on behalf of the Mission in Portsmouth, of which he was then in charge. It was my privilege to minister to him in his last hours. I feel sure that this book will inspire others to follow his example.

A. F. LONDON.

*July 25, 1916.*

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WINCHESTER COLLEGE owes a deep debt to Dr. Linklater. The Winchester Mission to the Portsmouth slums is not unnaturally associated in the public mind with the ten years of Robert Dolling's heroic work from 1885 to 1896. But Winchester knows that it was Linklater who in his two and a half years' work as the Missioner from 1882 to 1885 planted the seed, the rich fruits of which were reaped in the after years.

Winchester had supported a School Mission for several years before 1882. But in 1882 a new start was made, which gave a fresh spring of life to the movement. The previous Mission had been planted in East London, and only indirectly influenced the boys in the school. In 1882 it was determined to bring the cause of the Mission into immediate contact with the school by planting it in the neighbouring town of Portsmouth; and Linklater was wisely chosen to carry out the evangelistic work, not only in the slums but among the boys in the school. From that time onwards the school authorities regarded the influence in the school as not a whit less important than the good done in Portsmouth itself.

It was in December, 1882, that Dr. Linklater and Mr. Sergeant, the Winchester House Master, started work together at St. Agatha's, the mission district containing some five thousand of the very poorest in the unwieldy parish of All Saints. Ere long they were joined by another Wykehamist, the Rev. Gordon Wickham. These three devoted colleagues carried on their evangelizing labours for about two years and a half; and it was during those two years and a half that the foundation of all the great work that has been done in connection with St. Agatha's, both at Portsmouth and at Winchester, was laid by Dr. Linklater. At Portsmouth, to speak only of the most important material results, the old St. Agatha's Mission Church was built and dedicated in 1884, the site for the present Basilica was secured, and a very substantial sum obtained towards the building of the church;

while some excellent higher grade schools, which it was afterwards thought too costly to continue, were established for the benefit not only of St. Agatha's but of the whole of Portsmouth.

At Winchester, as Dolling was told on his first visit to the school, "Linklater took all our hearts by storm." It was a revelation to the boys to learn of the love and the self-sacrifice of Mission work, to learn of the crying needs of our vast city populations, to be taught to recognize the blessing of sympathizing with those needs. That revelation was first brought home to the school by Linklater; and the debt Winchester owes to him for this will never be forgotten.

WILLIAM ANDREWES FEARON.

THE CLOSE,  
WINCHESTER.



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## PORTRAITS

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# ROBERT LINKLATER

## INTRODUCTORY

"It is the mind that makes the man."—OVID.

"SYMPATHY," says Carlyle, "is the very soul of life, sincerity the first characteristic of all men in any way heroic." Both these qualities were marked characteristics of the subject of this Memoir, and if apology be needed for presenting to the public what professes to be a "character sketch" rather than the "life" of a priest of the Church great in goodness, strong in simplicity, heroic in sincerity, it is that those to whom the Missioner was perhaps but a name, may learn to admire, and give thanks for, the legacy of the beautiful example of one whose memory will ever be precious to his friends, who, though they may mourn the "passing" from the stage of this world's life of so unique and attractive a personality as that of Robert Linklater, will not forget the man whose finest gifts and noblest qualities were consecrated to GOD'S honour and so generously offered in the service of his fellows.

Early in his ministry Robert Linklater acquired the reputation of being a most successful Missioner; the title was no misnomer, for his example was a sermon, the man himself his message, and everything about

him so unmistakably genuine that he seemed in all to bear the stamp of his Maker. His devotional habits, his self-denial, his loyal, affectionate interest in his friends, all was so essentially "real."

Very early in his ministry he came into collision with those in authority in the Church, and in his first curacy received a sharp reprimand for teaching confession, the very mention of which in those days was bound to raise a storm in any parish; but Robert Linklater was never anything but loyal to the spirit of the Prayer-Book and to the Church of his Baptism.

When in 1868 three of his fellow-curates at St. Peter's suddenly and in one week abruptly joined the Roman Church, a blow which half killed both himself and Father Lowder, and nearly annihilated the Mission, Father Linklater, staunch and steadfast, remained to support him at his post. To us who knew all this it seems almost ludicrous that he should have been called to encounter the opposition and antagonism that he did from those who in complete ignorance of his real character gave the rein to prejudice, and imagined him swayed by Romish tendencies.

There were those, on the other hand, who objected to his staunch loyalty and rigid adherence to all implied by English Catholicism, and were annoyed when he declined to go "far enough" to meet their views.

Owing, possibly, to his Irish descent, he was unflinchingly anti-Papal, and, often to the despair of the young servers, was never a Ritualist. He had seen, in his early years, enough harm done to the Church of his Baptism through the disloyalty and foreign

usages introduced at St. Peter's by those who later joined the Roman Communion, an experience which made him suspicious of such things.

Fearless and outspoken on all occasions, he never failed to speak when he thought matters were not quite square, or when he felt there was a desire to introduce innovations not in accordance with the teaching of the Church and the spirit of the Prayer-Book, or if anything that might prove harmful to her life was permitted to creep in.

There are entries in his diaries showing how bravely and unflinchingly he stood out against all foreign accretions as to ritual or doctrine in the Church of England which some desired to introduce. It mattered not with whom he had to remonstrate, he never shirked the painful duty when he felt it to be right or necessary.

Transparently sincere himself, he was never doubtful of the integrity of another; but, if there was anything that made him really angry, it was the discovery of insincerity. Any sort of cant, the affectation of religious phraseology, anything savouring of unreality, was to him abhorrent. Though always considerate for the feelings and prejudices of those opposed to him, Dr. Linklater was entirely out of sympathy with those anxious to adopt modern fads and ritual in vogue amongst some of his younger brethren, who were attracted by such things, and inclined to adopt teaching more sentimental than sound, and devotions tending rather Romewards than to Catholicism.

Human nature being what it is, it would have been scarcely possible for such a man, who, although he never willingly gave offence, never attempted to win popularity, not sometimes to make enemies.

The outspoken candour with which he would denounce any course of which he disapproved, regardless apparently of evil consequences to himself, and the bold courage with which he stated his objections, sometimes aroused antagonism against one who, though the very reverse of autocratic, was resolute in allowing none to belittle the dignity of his Office, and firm in resisting any interference with his authority.

His Irish blood was hasty, and often provoked him to act on impulse, and possibly on the spur of the moment give utterance to words he afterwards regretted.

Moreover, he was one of those men who could not pass unnoticed in a crowd; he possessed too unique a personality, and his very power of attraction may sometimes have served to rouse animosity in men of a turn of mind alien to his own. Is it not ever true, as the ancients affirm, that men mostly "condemn what they do not understand"?

But however hot or hasty the Prebendary might be on any occasion, no one could ever accuse him either of lack of loyalty in upholding principle, or want of kindness and forbearance in his treatment of those whose views were opposed to his own.

A more splendid exponent of Catholicism it would have been difficult to find—large-hearted, wide-minded, and sympathetic, setting himself determin-

ately to plant and to build, to break up factions, pull down party spirit, and ever suspicious of anything like the temper of congregationalism.

Enthusiastic and sanguine, yet wise and sober in his schemes for improving the conditions of life, spiritual or temporal, whether for the poor and out-cast of the slums, or of the better-class population of North London, he ever proved himself to be a strong, safe guide, who led his people through life's many tortuous paths in sober "Gospel ways," taught them to cling to the Prayer-Book and to love the Bible. He read it himself as if each word was precious, and may have learnt in early years the art from Father Lowder, of whom the poor at St. Peter's used to say they loved to hear him read the Bible, for "he do make it speak." Certainly to hear the Prebendary read a lesson would arrest the attention of the most careless.

In one of his sermons Canon Liddon says, in order to understand Holy Scripture, you "must live it." Those who knew Linklater felt that he "lived it," and, living it, drew men to love it.

A man's gait and bearing often reveal his profession, and not seldom betray his character. The messenger of peace, the bringer of "good tidings," who had seen much active service in the field, seemed to bear upon him the stamp of his Master. A braver soldier of the Cross it would be difficult to find. Forward in the fray, yet eager for peace; bold to strike, but strong to sheathe the sword; tender to the weak, but valiant in attacking the strong; firm in controversy,

steadfast in charity; ready to speak, but never unready to suffer, for the "Truth's sake"; calm, unruffled, almost glad, under misconception; a noble foe, a generous friend, as simple as he was strong in setting forth the highest principles, the noblest aims of life. None so ready as he to hold out the hand of fellowship, not only to his brethren in the ministry from whom he differed, but to others, of every class and social grade, holding views differing widely from his own, to whom Catholicism was never, by his manner of inculcating it, made repellent

No great preacher in the technical sense of the word, yet, rising from the depth of his own heart, what fell from his lips came forth with such intense earnestness and force that his utterances could not fail to arrest the attention, and impress his hearers in a manner that made great the result of his words.

When he took up the work at Stroud Green, he had for his colleagues three ex-Rectors as curates, and with such a band of faithful clergy it was possible to plant the Catholic faith firmly in this Protestant stronghold, where, gaining firm root, it has yielded, and will yield, much fruit.

Many an enthusiastic, would-be leader, eloquent and brilliant will, by reason of burning oratory, carry men away, and inflaming their imagination, lift them off their feet, to fall very possibly from some giddy height to the detriment (if no worse) of their practical usefulness in this workaday world. But Robert Linklater, full of zeal and enthusiasm, was a leader of men, of balanced mind, never unpractical, as

strengthening in his dealings with young and old as he was vigorous in instilling sound doctrine, as simple in practice as he was sincere in principle.

Tender, but never anything but strong, Robert Linklater elevated all who came under his influence; always exhilarating, and never, as are often ardent souls, exhausting, he did not "take it out of you," but he always "put it into you."

Foolish women, silly girls "bored to tears," shallow youths, ritualistic young gentlemen playing at religion, who tried their pastors' powers of endurance to the utmost limit—they, and their elders, all turned to the Prebendary for help, and, coming in contact with him, were lifted out of sin and folly, and in how many cases helped and healed!

Children and young people, whom he always attracted, were to him a joy and delight, and his happy manner and genial temperament won all hearts, for as a poor worn Wapping woman expressed it: "We all love Father Linklater, he do help us, for he be such a jovial gentleman."

Ever ready to sympathize, none who knew the Missioner could long remain untouched by the warmth of the kind heart, which flowed forth in the sweet, gracious courtesy which stamped him as one of GOD'S most perfect "gentlemen." It was not merely a delightful manner, but something deeper and more far-reaching than any surface charm, which, when revealed, never failed to stir hearts and win human lives to GOD'S service. Intent on doing the work of his Master, he acted ever as a saviour of men.

He drew, but would have scorned to drive, the soul—even that of the “least”—into right ways, and never sought to convince anyone against their own will.

There are those whose gifts may excite wonder, if not admiration, but we somehow prefer to survey them at a respectful distance—they are too exhausting for common life, too intense for daily wear. The “daily round” is, in fact, pursued in their absence with greater ease and comfort than in their presence. It would almost seem that “the saints,” as a modern preacher of some repute shrewdly put it, “are not always easy to get on with.” This could not be said of Robert Linklater, whose geniality was as universal as it was attractive.

His experience as Missioner taught him that many a well-disposed soul will be alienated from GOD by the manner in which religion, so-called, is presented to him, and he sought to avoid methods of inculcating truths which not infrequently serve to make it repellent to men. He knew that Catholicism proclaimed in un-Christlike fashion by unworthy means will not redeem the world from worldliness, and often appears to fail; it is not the Faith, but the man who professes it, that is the failure.

A man full of the spirit of hope, he was consequently strong to inspire others, and successful in his efforts to vanquish evil.

When he was at Stroud Green, the Doctors used to say they always knew when the Vicar had been visiting their patients, for they were invariably greeted with a “smile”—it was the smile of hope.

In the face of persecution, in spite of many discouragements, in the monotony of arduous hours of drudgery, the priest never seemed to lose heart. Hope is strong if "Love at heart prevail." He worked on, and felt sure, not of success, but of victory, for his power, not his own, was of GOD. "It is this assurance," says a modern writer, "which gives to the Christian 'a brightness to his look, a gentle firmness to his tone, a perseverance to all his efforts,' " which of themselves are the great means of influencing those he is seeking to win.

He goes forth in the spirit of one to whom victory is assured, for "this is the Victory that overcometh, even our Faith."

A true Evangelist, not content with exerting himself to reclaim the lost, he was ever eager to encourage the good, urging them on to seek the highest.

His genial manner and spontaneity were calculated to put the shyest at their ease, the giddiest and most frivolous at home with him, his quick sympathy inspiring all alike to give him their confidence; and yet, without making them afraid of him, he sobered the thoughtless, and led them to feel the seriousness of life, taught them to enter into it by inciting them to the quest of the realities worth pursuing.

The man of glad mind, who dwelt habitually on the thought of the "lovingkindness of the LORD," the "graciousness of GOD," and the "goodness of His children," was a veritable "Gospel Preacher," and could not fail to show that the Message he proclaimed was indeed "Good News."

Living with "Heaven in his sight," he breathed no rarefied air; but his own standard was a high one, and he gave all, more especially those at all antagonistic, credit for the best motives.

If the perusal of these pages may serve to cheer and encourage any reader to do the like, the purpose of the sketch will in part be accomplished, the effort of the author more than rewarded.

The writer is well aware that what has been sketched is but a faulty picture, giving expression but very inadequately to an exceptionally interesting figure; yet, as the author's personal recollections of the Prebendary extended over some thirty years, and he can claim acquaintance with friends who knew him for a still longer period, the sketch, slight as it is, may prove of interest to these, as well as to some to whom he has hitherto been but a name.

To several friends the author is indebted for the use of letters and much valuable assistance. To the Editors of the Parish Magazines of Holy Trinity, Stroud Green, and St. Peter's, London Docks, the *Hornsey Journal*, and the *Church Times*, he is no less indebted for leave to use their printed matter, together with help from many friends not severally mentioned who rendered service which he desires gratefully to acknowledge. Their practical help has insured accuracy, and though very imperfect, the record, so far as the writer could make it so, is true and correct.

ST. JAMES,

July, 1916.

## CHAPTER I

### EARLY YEARS

"We live by admiration, hope, and love."

THE forbears of Robert Linklater came south originally from the Orkney Islands, where the Linklaters abound, and can be traced back as far as the year 900, when they were among the chief families or "notables" of the island in the time of Eirik II., A.D. 900, one of the small islets facing the Scottish coast being called "Linklater."

Robert Linklater was born in Ireland, April 12, 1840, and on his mother's side came of an Irish family famous for its beautiful women and its Banshee. His great-grandmother was a friend of the eminent Lord Palmerston, and of the Earl of Enniskillen, and his grandmother, a brilliantly witty and clever woman, had the advantages of an exceptionally good education.

As a little boy, Robert Linklater went to Brentwood Grammar School, under Dr. West. He used to tell the story of how, when one term he went back two or three days later than the other boys, he found them all looking awfully sick and glum. It transpired that they had been living on bread-puddings made of the crusts which they had shied the previous term on to

the top of the book-case, and which had been discovered during cleaning operations in the holidays and kept by the worthy Doctor for consumption upon their return. Another story was of a boy with a musical turn of mind, who ranged all the little boys as the different notes of an organ, and each had to squeak out his note when the conductor brought down his baton on their unoffending heads. He always retained an affection for his old school (which to our more modern notions does not sound altogether ideal!), and for many years attended the Annual School Dinner. It was always a pleasure to him to meet the old friends.

At the early age of fifteen, he had to leave school, and after that was constrained to live a sad and strenuous life owing to family dissensions, with which he was entirely unconcerned; but as the elder son, he was obliged, on very narrow means, to work for the support of his mother, sisters, and younger brothers. Nothing daunted, however, he began to take junior Masterships, and eventually, while still in his teens, became Mathematical Master at St. Mary's College, Harlow, teaching boys older than himself. Here he not only taught, but studied, and at length, in spite of great obstacles, he obtained, with the assistance of his uncle, the Rev. C. Ingham Black, D.D., his degree of B.A. in the University of Dublin, afterwards taking his M.A. and D.D. degrees.

During his stay at Trinity College he was ceaselessly at work, and in the vacations, instead of taking holidays, he conducted large reading parties, and

formed amongst his Irish pupils many life-long friendships.

As soon as he was in the position to attain the object for which he had all along been labouring, he was ordained, and in 1863 began his ministerial career, afterwards working for some years at Frome under Mr. Bennett, so well known as one of the leaders of the Catholic revival in the English Church when at St. Barnabas, Pimlico.

But his first curacy was in Yorkshire, and the story of his first experiences as a parish priest we will leave him to relate in his own words :

“ ILLINGWORTH, IN MEMORY OF JULY, 1863.

“ I am always trying to put down on paper my feelings before they have vanished into forgetfulness. Alas ! alas ! the effort is in vain. As well try to grasp a shadow ! They are so real and seem so substantial at the time that one cannot believe they will ever pass away ; a moment after they are gone, and gone for ever. The landscape that was lit up with golden glory in the sunshine hardly seems the same in the cheerless east wind, half hid with fog ; therefore I know at starting that I cannot accomplish what I am aiming at. I have looked forward to this visit to Illingworth in the vain hope that in the actual locality, on the very spot, amidst the same surroundings, I might be able to recall some of the impressions of twenty-seven years ago, when I commenced my ministry for CHRIST in His Holy Church as curate here.

Alas! it has all perished, and nearly all my old friends are dead. I have been walking along the very road I so often travelled over a quarter of a century ago, and I have seemed to myself a ghost. The houses are the same, I know every turn and view, but a new people live here, and the long, long ago is lying dead and buried in the churchyard upon the hill.

"Even now surely my place of writing ought to help me. I am lying ill in bed in the Vicarage. In this very room, most likely, my old Vicar died; at any rate, in the room beneath the most bitter hour of my young life was lived.

"I had come to see the Vicar and the place before accepting the curacy; it was my start in the Ministerial life. I was a mere boy, seeking ordination as soon as I was of canonical age.

"All my life I had longed for Holy Orders. My father had at first fought against my wish; he wanted me to go into the Army, he sent me to sea, he put me into a friend's office in London. But my mother had steeped my heart in the love of Holy Church, and, unworthy though my life has been, the love of Holy Church has been its one consistent guiding passion. GOD forgive me that I have so often failed and swerved, so poorly carried out the good intentions of my heart, but GOD knows that never for one moment have I wilfully given up the Quest, that above all things I have loved the Church, and ever tried, though feebly and unworthily, to serve the Bridegroom.

"Well, twenty-seven years ago I am in the room below; a stripling full of enthusiasm and love of souls, with the daring ambition to win souls to GOD, to bring

England back to CHRIST, if only GOD should be pleased to use one's poor life for His great purposes.

"However ambitious and presumptuous my desire, it was better for a young man to commence his work believing in his vocation, and with noble ambition and spiritual aims, than only to enter such a sacred calling as a means of living, and to work only for the loaves and fishes. Loaves and fishes! My stipend was eighty pounds a year.

"I think I had even then a certain amount of common sense. I don't believe I expected any immediate result; if I did, I am sure my first written sermon, delivered from a 'three-decker' in the most miserably bare meeting-house sort of church I have ever seen, to a scanty congregation of some dozen souls sleeping through the dreary service in the great square pews that filled the area—I should think this, my first experience as an evangelist, must have crushed all the nonsense out of me.

"But I am anticipating; at present I am down in the room below, waiting to see the Vicar, who has asked me to call upon him about the curacy.

"I think that the dreary, rainy day, the long two hours' wait in his study, must have somewhat damped my ardour. The jolting drive through the poorest and grimiest slums of Halifax, past huge mills throbbing with machinery and pouring out at dinner-time a flood of human lives, men, women, and little children of weary worn faces, some of them so desecrated by the lines of evil passions. All this tended to depress me, an impressionable Irish boy used to lovely scenery, and depending on its beauty as a part of life. I had

a long toil up a dreary hill, the cold-looking, comfortless, stone built cottages of the people I had come to serve looming out of the rain and fog. (I declare my heart shivers at the recollection even now!—now that I have discovered the treasures that are hid beneath the gloom, the lovely, true, pure hearts that dwell in these homes of stone!) And then the Vicarage! the most unlovely-looking dwelling I think I ever saw, with not one thing of beauty either inside or outside of it, with not even the charm of age. A commonplace dwelling, so small that one wonders how it was possible to house a family in it.

“The Vicar was not at home, but I was to wait. I waited a long hour, then, tired of my thoughts, I turned to the book-shelf. To my dismay, there was not a single readable book there, not even the common works of theology which one expects to find in every clergyman’s house. It was a shock and a revelation to me. However, at last my Vicar came—a fine, striking, well-built man, very courteous and kind. His letters had fascinated me; he drew in them a most graphic picture of his thirty years’ struggle in this wilderness of souls; he so longed for help. He wanted his services improved after the example of All Saints’, Margaret Street, and he always signed himself, ‘Yours in Catholic fellowship.’

“My heart went out towards such a man. I felt the greatest pity for his thirty years’ fruitless struggle, and although I had offers of more attractive curacies, I determined to throw in my lot with him.

“In due time I was ordained, and entered on my work. It hardly belongs to this place to recount my

interview with the Bishop, but I cannot refrain for fun's sake.

"The Bishop had insisted on a preliminary interview, a reasonable demand enough, and yet, as the interview only lasted a few minutes, part of which time we were at lunch, he might have accepted my photograph as an equivalent, for at that time I was living in the extreme west of Ireland, on the coast of Donegal, in charge of a reading party, and forty miles from a railway-station. I told the Bishop that in appointing an interview he must give me at least two days to get to him. This he did not do, and I had to travel night and day, and by a special car, my forty miles of wild mountain road to reach his Lordship. A pretty penny it cost me—money that I could ill afford, as I was earning my support by tuition at the time. As I was leaving him, he inquired about my route, and when he found that I was not to arrive in Dublin until seven o'clock on Sunday morning, he was horrified. He said, 'Surely, you will not travel on the Sabbath.' I did not explain to him that I would have finished my Sabbath-day's journey by that time, as it was Saturday mid-day when we said good-bye."

## CHAPTER II

### EARLY YEARS OF MINISTRY

"IN due course I was ordained. My Bishop was on that day preaching before the University of Cambridge, and arranged to hold his Ordination in one of the College chapels there.

"The next move was to Yorkshire, and I soon found myself in my new sphere of labour, and with a heart full of expectation and hope I went to take possession of the 'diggings' provided for the 'new curate.'

"Having arrived at my destination, I had now to plunge into parish work. My Vicar did not help me much, but at least he let me alone. He took me to two or three of the principal folk, and then turned me loose upon the parish.

"Such a wonderful parish!—a mixture of the wildest parts of Highland scenery, and the grimy slums of Leeds or of the Black Country. At one point a lovely heather moor with crags, purling mountain torrents, weeping birch-trees; and then round the corner a busy mill, and noise, dirt, coaldust paths, and crowds of working people. This is a general description of the place. You cannot find more lovely nooks and corners than are to be met with here and there, and yet everything is made gloomy by smoke, and the vegetation is poisoned by the fumes of chemicals.

The streams must once have been full of trout, but now befouled and dark the grimy water dashed against boulders of rock along the river-banks. But all the same it is glorious, and whether you look over Halifax on a clear, bright Sunday morning, when the smoke has cleared away, and you can see the opposite hills; or from Illingworth Moor you look across the Missenden Valley towards Mount Tabor, or down towards Wheatley, the view is lovely, like a beautiful girl with a very dirty face, where even the grime and dirt cannot quite obliterate the beautiful features, the play of expression. And if the physical contour of the place exhibited these contrasts, how much more the human life that is lived in it! I have never come across nobler specimens of human nature than at Illingworth. Strong, sturdy, honourable natures; men and women who knew their duty to GOD and to their neighbour, and in a splendid simple-minded manner just did it; who, in spite of their few church advantages, and the very little help they received from her ministrations, had grown from grace to grace, and as a matter of course said their prayers, read their Bibles, and practised in their lives the Presence of GOD.

“These were the young people who gladly welcomed my ministrations, accepted my teaching, and constituted themselves the stalwart champions of the Church.

“Instead of being jealous and prejudiced, they rejoiced that new life was moving in the parish, and that an effort was being made to reach the thousands of precious souls that were yet outside the influence of the Church.

"I am glad to have the chance of saying this, to bear witness to the fact that Church-life does not depend on the externals of religion, that devout and saintly souls have been trained up in every age under the immediate care of GOD Himself, although to the outward eyes the Church seemed dead and her influence nought. It must comfort us very much indeed to know that GOD Himself, in His own wonderful way, supplies the defects in the teaching and practice of the Church. And yet these are the people who welcome new life and light, who most easily accept the doctrines of the Church, because they find that they are the logical conclusions of the principles which have guided them through all their life, and which they have tested in their own experience.

"Shallow and shifting minds may despair of England, say that the Church has lost her hold upon the people, and that it is impossible to revive religion in the land; it is simply their ignorance of the facts that patient study would bring to their knowledge, their inability to read the evidences of the Divine Life that our poor people are living, or to recognize the Presence of the Father of the poor, who comforts and solaces them in the trials of their hard and struggling lives.

"I am trying to recall my feelings the first day of my working life at Illingworth, when I felt that a beginning had to be made, but I did not know where or how to begin. So many thousand souls scattered so confusedly, the dreary uncertainty, the repelling horror that seized me—it is too awful to think of even after this lapse of time. There was nothing for it but

to make a plunge, and so I commenced on a row of cottages near to the house I lodged in, and I determined to do my visiting methodically, and from house to house.

"I suppose at the time I felt that no good came of it, that it was labour in vain, but GOD has spared me twenty-six years to acknowledge most reverently and humbly that He blessed even my first day's work, and that He has permitted me to see the result of seed sown that very first day. The first house gave me a choir-boy, a volunteer organist, and the mother and sister came to greet me the day I returned to Illingworth Church after so many years. My dear little organist, alas! was dead.

"Having once broken the ice, the work became most fascinating. It was indeed like being a merchant-man seeking goodly pearls, only I could not be content with one, although I often felt that one would have compensated me for all the sorrows of my life. Each new find only whetted my appetite and made me more eager to penetrate into the wonderful treasure-land, such glorious discoveries, such immediate results. It got abroad among the people that the new curate was visiting the parish from house to house, and the novelty of the thing excited the imagination of the dear simple folk, and gave a magic influence to the visit. There was no danger of wasting one's time in mere social talk. The visit was Apostolic, and we went to the tremendous issues of Eternity at once. One household passed me on to the next, and while the cakes for the evening meal were baking on the hearth, the family would be

gathered round the preacher in the comfortable glow of the firelight, and the emptiest-headed fool would have been made earnest and eloquent by the pathetic surroundings and the appealing trust of the rugged, honest hearts who were thus waiting upon his lips. The only interruption, perchance, would be the mother of the house now and again opening the oven-door, or turning the cake—not an interruption really, but an interval emphasizing the action of the drama, like the chorus of a Greek play, a strophe, or anti-strophe, bringing heavenly things down to the region of things on earth.

“The Yorkshire people are a most wonderful race, sturdy and honest, too simple-minded to be much affected by the accidents of wealth or position. A man’s a man, and a woman’s a woman; they are not conscious of any inferiority in themselves even if they are poor. The bond of labour is only a bond inasmuch as it binds equally both master and man, and the labourer does not sell his opinion or his principles, or his self-respect; he gives what he is paid to give, and he calls his master by his Christian name. They are so transparently honest themselves that they are rather at the mercy of rogues and charlatans, especially in religion, but they have such splendid intellectual capacities that the Church, with her logical sequence of teaching and Sacraments following of necessity from Dogma, must eventually win them all.

“In my hot-headed and very youthful enthusiasm by-and-by I began teaching about the Church and Bishops. The Dissenting ministers of the parish fol-

lowed suit, and preached that *they* were Bishops. The hard-headed Yorkshiremen said, 'Well, if we must have Bishops, better have the right sort,' so they came to church.

"It was an astonishment to me how the Bethels and Providence Chapels took fright because the Church was manifesting a little bit of life. They had special missions and courses of sermons to stop the leakage to the Church. They did not stick at trifles in their wordy war. For instance, at one chapel they got up the following pantomime: a man rushed up the pulpit stairs in hot haste and interrupted the preacher in the middle of his sermon. The message completely took away the breath of the preacher. With an air of amazed astonishment, he whispers back to the messenger; they mutually shake heads at one another, and at last the preacher delivers himself: 'My brethren, I've just had a message from the curate; he says "you are all going to H—ll."' I need not say I never sent this or any other message.

"In another chapel they had a woman revivalist. A man in the congregation interrupted her with, 'Are you preaching out of the Bible?' She answered 'Yes.' He then said: 'My Bible says a woman is not to preach.'

"It will be seen by this that questions of Church discipline were beginning to be discussed in the parish, and men and women were examining the matter for themselves.

"But it must not be supposed that one's campaign was altogether a march of triumph. I had lots of chaff to stand from men, to say nothing of more

serious opposition. It was the custom in those days in this part of the country, if they saw a man they did not know, to 'sod' him—that is, to kick out of the roadside with their great heavy wooden boots a huge lump of earth and grass, and to bang it at the stranger's head. If he did not like the first application, they gave him another. I determined to prevent this in my own case, so the first group of men I passed in my parish wanderings that looked threatening I went boldly across and faced, and asked them what they wanted. One fellow answered, 'We want to know whether you're parson or clerk?' This seemed prodigiously funny to his companions, but when I smilingly replied, 'My fine fellow, if you come to church next Sunday you will see,' the laugh was completely turned in my favour. In this way I suppose I paid my footing. Another surly-looking customer scowled at me as I entered his cottage one evening, and to modify my reception I blandly explained that I was the new curate. 'Well,' he said, 'when we want you we'll send for you.' A delighted roar of laughter, however, won him. I said, 'Well, you *are* polite!' He then said, 'As you're here, perhaps you'd better sit down,' and we became great friends.

"But now I must approach the services of the Church. I have already said that my Vicar won me by his beautiful letters, and his written declaration that he wished to make his services like All Saints', Margaret Street. I confess I thought we were a long way off the model, the first Sunday I spent in Illingworth Church. It was the most dreary building I

had ever seen, I think, and almost empty. The prayers were preached, the singing was mechanical and very poor. The sermon was delivered from a 'three-decker' which held at the same time, one above another, preacher, reader, and clerk. The preacher was habited in a black gown and trimmed with 'bibs'; the few people who were in church lolled about in their great square pews as if the prayers did not concern them. About twelve persons remained for the Holy Communion, for it was the first Sunday in the month, and there was only a monthly celebration, and that late—twelve persons out of a population of ten thousand.

"I am amazed now to think of my youthful courage—how I could have survived such an exhibition of spiritual nakedness of the land, how I had any heart to undertake a revival work under such depressing conditions. And yet these matters were of trifling importance compared with a difficulty which now presented itself. The Vicar never consumed the Blessed Sacrament. One was simply stunned. It was impossible to remain unless this could be altered. I suppose that the revelation was a fearful shock to me; it seemed as if such a condition of things had never been anticipated by me, and I know that the revelation was a fearful shock. The whole joy of life, the whole enthusiasm of one's heart went out of one. What was the use of building up, if after all there was no foundation to build upon? I came to the conclusion that unless this could be altered I must wash my hands of the sacrilege and seek work in some other parish.

"The next morning, with fear and trembling, and I hope with earnest prayers, I sought an interview with my Vicar, and in the most modest and yet firm manner I placed the matter before him. I pointed out how explicit the rubric was in ordering the reverent consumption of all that remained of the consecrated elements. He was really very good. He must have seen how deeply moved I was. He consented to our calling up some of the communicants to consume the Sacred Species, but it had to be in the Vestry. He absolutely refused to consume at the Altar. And so I had to be content with this compromise. The result was that by-and-by, when our numbers increased, and as the people began to understand Church doctrine, the whole congregation used to stand in adoration whilst the Most Holy was carried through their midst—a most illegal procession of the Blessed Sacrament, but I was not responsible for that.

"At first, and for a long time, my Vicar cordially accepted my services and backed up my teaching. I believe he even preached a sermon on Confession and priestly Absolution. I am sure his heart was stirred with the enthusiasm of the people, and that he was greatly encouraged by seeing the larger congregations in church and the very great increase in the number of our communicants. All went on as merrily as a marriage-bell. Some people had moved into the parish whose sons were being educated at Lancing. These young men became my most enthusiastic church-workers. In training the choir, singing in the choir, and in other ways they were the greatest help, and their example must have done a great deal of good in the parish."

We see in this account of his early ministerial experiences the same characteristic that marked all his after-life, the eager skill with which the Missioner availed himself of the services of others—coadjutors to assist him in his work. Young and old were always invited to co-operate, opportunities given to each one according to their capacity to promote the glory of GOD and further His cause.

On leaving Illingworth, in spite of the success of his work as Deacon, he had some difficulty in getting ordained Priest, on account of his well-known views, more especially with regard to Confession and the Real Presence. His Vicar, who had expressed a wish to have the service conducted on the lines of those at All Saints', Margaret Street, wrote to the Bishop accusing the young Deacon of being a "Puseyite," a "Jesuit in disguise," etc.

In his diary he gives the following account of what occurred: "The Bishop refused me Priest's Orders, but offered an interview to tell me why. I went to see him, not having the remotest idea of the charges made against me, or their source. The Bishop read my Vicar's letter; I produced the 'Si Quis' (my testimonial for Priest's Orders), signed by my Vicar, and asked the Bishop if he could reconcile the two.

"He still refused to ordain me that time. I accordingly declined to wait for the next Ordination, and threw up my curacy. I suffered fearfully at the time, for I loved my people and they loved me, and I was getting them back to the Church. We started a new church during the year and a half I was there,

and had a surpliced choir, choral services, a fitting Altar, and all reverently and properly arranged at the Celebration."

From this account we can see that the young Deacon must have had considerable influence, young as he was, over his Vicar, so that it seems strange indeed that he should have allowed private feelings, or a cooling of his affection towards his young colleague, to have influenced him to prevent his Ordination. He was, however, ordained Priest by the Bishop of Bath and Wells, or rather, by Bishop Anderson acting for him. He says, "The dear old Bishop (Lord Auckland) was most kind to me. I was pursued by my Lord of Ripon here, but he gave me a special hearing. I attended at the Palace at Wells, and was shown into his presence. 'Browne isn't here yet,' said he, 'and I don't know anything of these questions. Let us talk of other things till Browne comes.' So we talked of dogs and horses.

"When Archdeacon Browne arrived, he and the Bishop got hold of me and said, 'Now, about vestments: what are they like?' 'My Lord,' I answered, 'you have plenty of them up there,' and I pointed to the west front of the Cathedral, which is full of the statues of Bishops, etc., in their vestments

"At this time I was curate at Frome under the Rev. E. Bennett, and received from him the greatest kindness."

Mr. Linklater worked very hard there, and during the last three years he acted as curate-in-charge of

St. Mary's. Here he gained the friendship of Mother Agnes, who was in charge of the Orphanage.

He says in his diary : " When she gave up her work at Frome, I was happy enough to persuade her to settle in the parish of St. Saviour's, Leeds, where she has done wonders with the men and lads, and the poor people of the district, and where, too, she has her happy Home of Orphan Children."

It was at St. Saviour's that he held a large and important Parochial Mission in 1875. We give here an account of one day's work during that Mission, and every day was equally strenuous. His account of his day's work speaks for itself. " I communicated at eight, preached at Places' Mill at twelve (to about two hundred or three hundred hands). Preached to five hundred miners at an outlying place, and had a special train to take me there. This was followed by a large Mothers' Meeting and Children's Service (but these I did not take myself). Preached to about fifty lads at Knowsthorpe; then to men at St. Saviour's—a church full; more than twenty of them stayed behind to give in their names, and I heard their Confessions. I got out of church at 10 p.m., and did not get to bed till midnight. After the Men's Service I had addressed the women in the schoolroom."

## CHAPTER III

### MAN AND MISSIONER

FATHER LINKLATER'S first experience of Missionary Work at St. Peter's, London Docks, began about the year 1858, when he, then a layman, lived for about twelve months in the Mission House, making his first Confession in the Iron Church in Calvert Street, and there are not many left who can remember what the parish was like and the conditions of the people in those far-off days, when all the missionary spade-work had to be done. But a quotation of Father Linklater from a chapter of his in Miss Trench's "Life of Father Lowder" will give some idea: "Then my principal work was to organize a night-school—in such a neighbourhood the most ungrateful, exhausting, killing work that one can do. I must ever remember the first night. We had hired an old house in a convenient street. As there was no gas in the house, we had to improvise lights by sticking tallow candles in the desks. It took all my strength to keep out the tide of young men who tried to swarm in after the room was full. At last the door was closed. There were a large number in the school, young men of about twenty years of age, and they worked away pretty well during the time of instruction; but as soon as the command was given, 'Close your books,' as if by a pre-

concerted signal all the 'dips' were blown out, and in the helpless darkness whack they came at my devoted head, at every possible angle and from every corner of the room. The next night I was on the alert, and caught the ringleader in the very act of giving the signal. I boxed his ears as hard as I could. He coolly began to take off his coat and necktie, and some of my friends hallooed, 'Mind what you're at, sir; that's Bill ——, the Wapping Pet.' I had got hold of a prizefighter. I answered, 'I don't care who he is; if he comes here he must behave himself.' Luckily my man took it good-naturedly, and did not hit me. He could have smashed me to atoms if he had chosen. There is a great deal of genuine good-nature amongst these fellows, if they know that you are trying to do them good, and if you are not afraid to look them straight in the face. Another duty was to catch the very ingenious rascals who disturbed our services in the Iron Church by rolling stones down the roof. They found out that this made a noise like thunder inside. I caught one fellow in the very act, and shook him heartily. I fancy he was a costermonger, for he jerked out as well as his breath would let him, 'What do you shake me for as if I was a —— cauliflower?'"

When acting as Domestic Chaplain to Mr. Peter Hoare, of Kelsey Park, Beckenham, under conditions which apparently were ideal, he had seen during his short stay at St. Peter's how great was the Harvest and how few the labourers, and he contemplated resigning his chaplaincy; but let me give his own words: "In 1869 I was an idle man, living in the

kindest and pleasantest society, my only duty being to say the Daily Office of the Church in the loveliest little private chapel in England, and having no cure of souls except the members of my patron's household and the people who lived at the different lodges of the park. Besides, I had charge of some twelve boys who formed our choir. But as these lived in a separate Choir Home, under the care of a schoolmaster and matron, the duties thus imposed on me were of the lightest. There are few sweeter spots in England than the wild romantic park in which the Chapel of St. Agatha stands. The ever-changing glory of the woods; the weird, mysterious silence of the lake; the then tangled wilderness of trees and underwood abandoned to nature's skill; and the deeply touching story of the stricken life that sheltered in this old-world home—all these, and ten thousand other charms of nature and of life, made one's existence an unbroken round of ease and pleasure. But while one had strength and the heart for work, and with so much doing and still to be done for GOD, it was impossible to live such an easy life within sound of the battle's din, and almost within hearing of the roar of our great London. It was my kind patron who suggested that, instead of resigning my chaplaincy, as I intended, I should add to it voluntary Mission work in some poor East End parish."

It was the Hoare family who suggested the idea of St. Agatha's Mission, which effort they encouraged in every way, and it was in 1869 that Father Linklater offered his services to Father Lowder, who gladly



ROBERT LINKLATER, THE MISSIONER



welcomed him, and he found himself at his old work again and in the same old place. The night-school was started again in an old warehouse, and with the help of a staff of friends from the country it made great progress. It was in the days before the Thames Tunnel was built, and the party used to cross the river in a ferry-boat, "shooting out into the dark tide, seeing the awful 'port and starboard' lights of the steamers glaring upon us, hearing the gruff warning of the pilots and look-out men with a sense that the fierce tide was bearing us down and down—Charles Dickens only knew where—and at last hearing the keel grate on the gravel shore as we touched land, and, jumping out, tendered our penny to one-legged Jack. I treated my friends well, for I introduced them to a greater delicacy than Sybarite e'er dreamt of—baked potatoes 'all hot,' eaten in the street with pepper and salt."

The night-school was a great success from its commencement, the average attendance being one hundred "stalwart fellows hard at work all the evening, some learning their letters, others with distended tongue and sprawling arms going through the travail of a 'copy.'"

The story of the night-school, with its many experiences and varied and striking incidents and accidents, would fill a volume. One night the entrance of a policeman to arrest one of the pupils—another, a stand-up fight, during which Father Linklater did not interfere until one of the combatants, a bully, had had enough.

At St. Peter's in those days truly, says an old parishoner, "there were giants," and Father Linklater was one of them. Full of the love of CHRIST and the Missionary spirit, abounding in good works, thoroughly sympathetic, he would comfort the sad, share the joys of the happy, and was endowed with a marvellous gift of winning souls to CHRIST.

His own account of some of his parochial experiences gives a good idea of the man himself, and his power to deal with the "masses."

"In teaching them, the ordinary style of sermon—text, heads, and application—would not go down at all. I may shock my readers if I confess that I once preached on such a text as this: 'If you want to spend a happy day, go to Rosherville Gardens.' They were all ears to this, and I don't know that one could have chosen a more touching subject than that ceaseless, never-satisfied craving of the heart for happiness, if only for one day, which yearning can find rest alone in the heart of JESUS."

The "common people heard him gladly," for there was nothing "commonplace" about his teaching. He knew how to suit his words to his hearers. Hearts were lifted, and the eyes of his hearers glistened with a new hope, as he drew them, poor souls! crushed and sordid, to gaze upon the Cross, and Him who hung thereon—their SAVIOUR, CHRIST and GOD, who came and "emptied" Himself, stooping to win for them not *one*, but countless "happy days."

He suffered, "that for them there might be joy";

and as the preacher, impassioned with his subject, led them to the foot of the Cross, he unfolded to them the nature of the priceless gifts of Grace which, imparted through the Sacraments, extended to them—sin-stained and fallen—the hope of full and free forgiveness; told of the promise of salvation, and of restoration to their rightful heritage, as children of the FATHER, in His house and in His Kingdom.

Father Linklater refers, in what he contributed to the life of Father Lowder, to the Bible-class he held in connection with the night-school, describing its members as “a surging mob of noisy and blaspheming roughs, whom one had to quell by physical force.” Yet this roomful could often be held entranced by the Missioner, and those “roughs” ever came gladly to seek his help, and he was never anything but “father” to those at Wapping and in the slums.

If the rich resorted to him, the poor certainly clung to the priest who seemed to understand and enter so kindly into the trials of their troubled lives.

“The night-school is a very heavy drag upon energies and health. It would be labour enough even were the lads as quiet as lambs and eager for instruction, but it is fifty times worse when you have first of all to coax them to come in, then, when inside, to keep them in order and to teach them, when perhaps all the time the opposition party outside are heaving bricks and paving-stones at the door, or chaffing their friends inside by shrieking the funniest things through the keyhole. But yet I must

be grateful to the night-school, for our real Mission work has resulted from it."

In 1872 Father Linklater resigned his chaplaincy at Kelsey and settled down as one of the resident staff at St. Peter's, but his Beckenham friends still kept up their interest in St. Agatha's, and his old patron's little granddaughter, Agatha, Father Linklater's godchild, laid the foundation-stone of the new buildings on May 16, 1877, and on St. Thomas's Day, December 21, the Schoolroom and Chapel were formally blessed and set apart for the service of GOD, and from thence were occupied morning, noon, and night. The property was vested in five Trustees, and according to the terms of the Trust it must for ever be used for Religious, Educational, and Missionary purposes connected with the parish. There was the regular day-school, with a Babies' Crèche in the old School. In the afternoon were Mothers' Meetings, and (quoting from Father Linklater's Report for 1877) "in the evening the men fill the New Schoolroom, smoking, reading, playing bagatelle (there are two good tables), or skittles, or racing in the running ground outside. On Monday evenings the St. Agatha's Benefit Society meets to transact business. This is a sick-club, managed entirely by the men themselves. On Wednesday evenings the desks are cleared, and the neighbours pour in for the weekly concert, which once a month resolves itself into a ball (I wish my readers could see how correctly and pleasantly the guests behave). The drum-and-fife band practises twice a week; the stringed instrument band also twice a week."

In even such a slight summary of his work as this is, it would not be complete without a reference to the purchase of St. Agatha's Playground. In one of his letters he relates how the space was secured : "A large plot of ground in our parish was to be sold for building purposes. It is not often that spare ground is to be had in the heart of London, and this was only vacant because the houses had been pulled down by the East London Railway. I thought it would be a good thing to secure it as a playground for the poor little children who have no place to play in, and who are hunted by the police if they play in the streets. The Editor of the *Standard* inserted my appeal, and added kind words of recommendation; *Punch* also took up the cause, and the money came in fast and furious—so fast that in a month's time I had to cry, 'Hold! enough!' Mr. Robert Loder, M.P., had offered to make up the deficiency. The freehold was purchased and a wall built round it at a cost of about £1,300. We had a grand opening. Mr. and Mrs. Loder came down to perform the ceremony, and many other subscribers were present. The gift to the children has been the greatest boon."

Father Linklater was very keen on district visiting, which perhaps, after all, is a gift; certainly it requires special qualifications. But he was a born visitor, adapting himself to every circumstance, sympathetic, tactful, discreet, again, to use St. Paul's words, "all things to all men." He wrote once with some emphasis on the question of visiting : "District visiting is dreadful work until one's blood gets hot. It re-

quires an immense effort to make the start, and with a heart heavy with responsibility one knocks at the first door. But the work is so important and so real, that soon one is entirely absorbed by it. It is astonishing how much can be done by good, honest, thorough visiting. As it is the fashion nowadays amongst a certain clique of the younger clergy to disparage visiting, and to say that the people must come to them, and that the priest's place is in the church and not in the parish, I am the more anxious to give my testimony as to the value of house-to-house visiting in such a district as St. Peter's. Our work was entirely done by visiting. We made friends with the people in their own homes, and thus got them to attend the services of the Church : if we had worked on the other principle, St. George's Mission might just as well have remained at the West End. I have no patience with those who make a ridiculous theory the cloak for their own incompetence or laziness. Our Blessed LORD chose not angels, but men, as His ministers, in spite of their imperfections and unworthiness, that by means of human sympathy men might win an entrance into sinners' hearts for the Divine love. Besides, His own example is our best pattern in all true Missionary work."

He kept a note-book in which he recorded many of his visits. The records form most interesting reading, and are quite human documents, pathos and humour alternating. Space must be found for just one or two. The facts, as Father Linklater says, are authentic, the names only having been changed.

"*May 7.*—To-night I was called in to the death-bed of Mrs. Groggs. I had been visiting her for many years, and especially I had ministered to her these last few weeks, since I plainly saw that death was approaching. She was, I think, thoroughly penitent. I was shocked to see the sudden and great change in her. She turned wearily her poor thin face towards me, and told me how ill she was. I prayed with her, and Harry, the child, knelt and prayed, too. It touched my heart to see poor ragged Harry, the wildest-going scamp of the streets and terror of the neighbours, now softened by the mystery of approaching death, and kneeling to join in the prayers. No words can describe the awful filth of that room, where day and night the whole family live—a lad of nineteen years of age, a daughter fifteen, several younger ones, and the father and mother. The bed and pillows were swarming with vermin. Deeply as my heart was moved, I could not help watching them as they crawled over her pillow. Harry seemed to be her great care, the tenderest love of her mother's heart—a love which she showed by telling me what a bad boy he was. I comforted her by saying I thought he was much better—which is a fact. I then tried to prepare her for the Blessed Sacrament. The awful smell of that room still hangs about me. I feel poisoned.

"*May 8.*—I left Mrs. Groggs late last night—past ten—and, feeling that every moment was precious, I urged her most strongly to receive the Blessed Sacrament. She had been for some time past preparing. Poor soul, she has the common dread of

the Holy Mysteries, as if it were signing her own death warrant to receive; and so in her ignorance, knowing not the joy of our LORD'S presence in the soul, she begged for delay. Of course I told her that it was not a thing to thrust upon her, but a priceless blessing to be sought; and that I could not even offer It to her whilst she showed any reluctance; however, I said, I would call round the first thing in the morning to see how she was, and if her mind was in the same way. Having said some prayers I left. This morning after the first celebration I was with her, at half-past seven. But she was better, and she thought she would wait for another day. It was a sight, that dirty room, that awful bed swarming with vermin, and two little children in bed with her, one at the foot, the other on the pillow.

"*May 8, 11 p.m.*—I have just returned from Mrs. Groggs. Poor thing, she seems to be softening; she put out her hand, so thin and so dirty, for me to hold. I exhorted her to lift up her heart to our LORD, to realize His great love for her, the love that led Him to die for her on the Cross; and I spoke of the great pledge of His love, the Blessed Sacrament. I told her that she must trust His wisdom and His love, and do what He commanded her to do, which, as she truly repents and steadfastly believes, could not be wrong. So she actually asked me to give her the Holy Communion to-morrow; the difficulty seems to have been the fish-curing operations below at the early hours of the morning. Groggs, the husband, I hear, is at the public-house. I spoke to him, and told him he ought to be with his dying wife.

"*May 9.*—To-day I gave to poor Mrs. Groggs, dying, her first and last Communion. It was a sight to move one's heart. In the early fresh morning, whilst the neighbours were asleep, before the air was sullied with oaths and blasphemies, the poor dying woman looking on with such a wistful wondering air, the little altar with its bright velvet cloth, and gold cross and candles, such a contrast in its purity and beauty to the filth of the room, and in the bed with the poor woman, Harry at the foot and the little girl at the head. The children wondering and awed by the solemnity and strangeness of the whole act. There I gave her The Body and The Blood of CHRIST. Oh, what joy! what peace and comfort to the poor worn-out sufferer. I said the thanksgiving and left her. This evening I again visited her, and she is so tranquil and resigned, I never before felt so deeply what it is, 'the preaching the Gospel to the poor.'"

Another entry :

"At the day-school to-day I saw James Harding delivering some coals. Says James to me, 'There's another good teetotaler gone wrong.' 'Your father?' I inquire. 'Yes,' said he; 'last night.'

"A few hours after I was leaving a house when I saw the father staggering across the road in his shirt-sleeves towards the 'Pig and Whistle' public-house. I was a long way off, but I shouted at the top of my voice, and in the most imperious tone commanded him to come to me. It so astonished him that he obeyed. I managed after a little coaxing to persuade him to return home. I entered with him, and asked Mrs.

Harding to make him a strong cup of tea. She required a little determined energy of look and word on my part to do this. I saw that I should have no effective help from her, and so I employed strong measures with my patient. I commanded him to put his boot up on a chair; this I unlaced and took off. The left foot next yielded to my tug. I then walked off with the boots and hid them. During the process we had some conversation. He wanted to know who was going to send his daughter away. He meant no offence, but as her father he thought he had a voice in the matter, etc., etc. He always is most anxious about his family and their welfare in a certain stage of his drunkenness; the next stage is to blacken their eyes and drive them out of doors and keep them in the street all night. I at once satisfied him. I answered categorically that the Directors of the Great Northern Railway were going to send away his daughter, for they had had their half-yearly meeting and declared a dividend, and consequently the train arrangements, as published by Bradshaw, would be adhered to, and she was to go by the twelve o'clock train the next day. As to the respectability of the situation, it was in the most lovely neighbourhood, contiguous to the Duke of ——. 'He meant no offence,' he said, 'only he wanted to know.'

In this last anecdote from life can be seen another of his chief characteristics, his keen sense of humour. Mischief, more or less innocent, he was always ready to originate or take part in, and very few escaped, at one time or another,

being the "butt" of his banter and friendly "chipping," and pages could be written of his "tricks." On one occasion, when on an excursion with some boys at Greenwich Park, he started some races, and pointed out an old gentleman as the "winning-post." But let me tell it in his own words: "Greenwich Hill is a famous place for races; the boys, once started, *must* go right down to the bottom, whether they like it or no. The difficulty is to find a winning-post. On one occasion I pressed into this service, without consulting him, an elderly gentleman with an umbrella who happened to be passing at the bottom of the hill. It was some time before he became aware of his interest in the event. But when at last he awoke to the fact that this human avalanche was making for him as fast as their little feet could carry them, and found that he could not dodge them, he turned at bay, and, brandishing his umbrella, prepared to receive cavalry. It was no use: the prize was the first who *touched* him, and touch him they did. I don't know what version of the affair he gave to his family afterwards, but I am afraid he did not see the joke, and I took care not to go near enough to him to explain it."

When on an excursion he never appeared to be *taking* us but coming *with* us, and enjoyed every moment, ever ready to join in a joke, with his pencil and note-book always available to depict scenes the sight of which caused amusement for many a day, for he was no mean caricaturist, while his sparkling wit and ready repartee always kept a party alive. And what a story teller! No wonder he says in one of his

letters, speaking of the gatherings of young men in his room at the Clergy House in Calvert Street: "The stories have to be told, not read; they were delighted with my version of 'Les Misérables,' especially with the character of the good Bishop."

It was now 1879, and, comparatively speaking, all the rough edges had been worn off St. Peter's, and the result of the religious teaching and humanizing influence could plainly be seen. The Parochial machinery, so ably put together by Father Lowder, was running smoothly, and the gatherings and behaviour in Father Linklater's room were somewhat different from the conduct of the boys in the old night-school days. As Father Linklater wrote: "Ah! those were dear and happy times. It made up for all the trials of one's life and the dreary disappointing work around, to feel the glow of these generous young hearts, as they sheltered round one and supported one by their enthusiastic love. The boys used to call my room their 'haven,' and often through the week have they counted the hours till Sunday should come round again."

The following paper, reprinted from *St. Peter's Parish Magazine*, and contributed by one of our City Aldermen, speaks for itself:

#### A FEW IMPRESSIONS FROM "AN OLD BOY."

A man wrote, a few days back, in one of our dailies, that he would willingly give many years of his past for a few moments' knowledge of the future. That man, assuredly, as a lad, could never have known Father

Linklater ; for I venture to say, that of all the old boys alive to-day, there is not one who would willingly sacrifice one moment's recollection of "the old room" for an eternity of vision beyond the present moment. For what joys has the future to give compared with the joys of the old days which, as lads, we lived with him whom we loved and almost idolized ?

There were a good number of us then. How many remain I cannot say. Many lands and seas may now divide us, and some, no doubt, have passed beyond the Veil. But wherever the Path of Life has led, whether Fortune has smiled or frowned, the memory of that room in the Old Clergy House has never been entirely lost, but has, on the contrary, I verily believe, very often encouraged one on and shone out as a bright light when the way was dark and the path unknown.

The room no longer remains, and he who was the centre of it all and gave it its life is now no more. What was the secret of it all ? It was, I think, the wonderful moral influence he exercised over all who came near him, thus proving him a born leader ; for he possessed a marvellously magnetic personality, which few or none could resist. Then, too, he was an Irishman, and had, therefore, a very keen sense of humour. This it was that gave him a healthy vision and kept his judgment from becoming distorted and atrabilious. His desire was not to make us goody-goody. In this he approached somewhat to Kingsley. But he did try to teach us a healthy, ruddy, manly Christianity, not a sickly, jaundiced, emasculated substitute, and with this end in view the pure breeze of the river with its manly exercise and the healthy excitement of the cricket field

became necessities. So we had our rowing and cricket clubs, our gymnasium, skittle alleys, ay! and not to leave out music, we had our drum-and-fife band.

A marvellous disciplinarian, yet capable, withal, of the tenderest love, he always remembered, nevertheless, that he was a man, and that we were boys; consequently, there was never any display of inordinate affection. If he had favourites, he never showed it; but I think he was too just for this, therefore he was not responsible for any vanity on our part. Prigishness would have had a very poor chance with him. Indeed, one felt it impossible to be a sneak in his presence, and when away from him love and loyalty helped to preserve us from it.

As a raconteur, I should say there were none to surpass and few to equal him. He could hold us spell-bound as he went on weaving his story, which always ended too soon and with the promise that the best of it was to come, and so it always seemed. Some of these stories have turned up in our reading in after life, and have been recognized as quite old friends.

## CHAPTER IV

### WAPPING AND COWLEY

IT was in 1869 that he threw in his lot with Father Lowder at St. Peter's, London Docks, and there he remained until the Father's death.

"I am a child of St. George's Mission," he once wrote, "and made my first Confession in Calvert Street." His mother, I think, had been interested in the Mission from the beginning, and provided some of the premises in Wellclose Square; but it was from Beckenham that he was first drawn into active work at St. Peter's, and his work was always personal; Mr. Cator, who was Rector of Beckenham at that time, afterwards joined him at Stroud Green.

In 1880 he left St. Peter's for Cowley, feeling, as he told us in his farewell sermon, the call to the religious life so intensely that he recognized it to be a duty to throw up work he loved, and leave the place and the people who loved him dearly.

His farewell letter to the supporters of the St. Agatha's Mission shows how keenly he felt the severance of the links that bound him so closely to his work at Wapping:

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I can hardly realize that I am saying good-bye to you for ever. I assure you that when I read the Re-

port just now—a St. Agatha's Report which I had not written myself—that a pang went through my heart. I saw more clearly than I had seen before how dead to the world and passed away I am.

I had promised myself the pleasure of writing this Report, to account for the money you gave me last Christmas; but I suppose it is better as it is. At any rate, I am glad to be able to wish you this last good-bye, and to thank you, for the last time, for all your generous help, and sympathy, and prayers. May GOD reward you; bless you in your homes and lives; bless your children and your dear ones. The St. Agatha's Mission, such as it is, is yours. I have been but the steward of your bounty.

If I may speak of myself, I would ask you to believe that I have followed GOD'S call in the step I have taken. It has been a fearful wrench. But it is no use to ask others to follow CHRIST if one shrinks back oneself from the call. I can only hope that the dear LORD is thus training me for future Missionary usefulness and the accomplishment of His Will.

At any rate, I can already see the good result of the step I have taken. My leaving has done more good to the children and people than all my eleven years of work. It has sealed it like a sacrifice. I wish you could have seen and heard all the love that has been poured out upon me from their dear hearts. Is it not something to be grateful for, a reward for life, that one has been permitted so thoroughly to win the confidence of these, the poorest of the poor, that they have opened their hearts with princely generosity, and have lavished upon me the treasures of their love?

And now, by my sacrifice, I have been able to pass on all that love, that precious love which I dared not keep, I have passed it on to JESUS.

You would have smiled to have seen my room crowded with lads, when my intentions became known, such dear lads, but whom any decent policeman would have looked upon with suspicion, asking me in the most straightforward way if it were really true that I was going to leave them (their earnest loving faces cut me to the heart), and when I told them as gently and lovingly as I could how the matter really stood and what my life was to be, you would have smiled to see their astonishment and horror. "What! give up all your books and pictures?" Alas! the poor material shell of the thing touched them more than the life itself. Well, there was one boy who understood me, and appreciated the situation (they call him "*Dot*," because he has had one eye burnt out with a red-hot poker); he at once became the centre of the group, as he narrated his experiences when *he* was "run in."

I must thank Mr. Drummond, of All Saints', Boyne Hill, and Mr. Janson, for their kind hospitality to our night-school on last Easter Monday. We went an immense party, with Drum and Fife Band, and had the pleasure of seeing the meet of the Royal Buck Hounds at Maidenhead Thicket. My fellows got round the cart and wouldn't be whipt or pushed away, so the huntsman in disgust said, "Well, the stag will make way for himself!" And sure enough he did; he sent four or five of them sprawling on the ground. I don't think they understand even now the mysteries

of the chase, for during our journey home they said, "Did you see that swell in hunting togs who got out of the train?" I said "Yes." They answered, "That's the cove that CAUGHT the stag."

One thing I am very glad of in my life—that I have been permitted to have a share in stirring up Missionary spirit in the three great public schools of England—Winchester, Wellington, and Eton. Winchester has already completed and settled its parish in Poplar, the most wonderful Missionary success of our age. Wellington contributes £30 a year to our St. Agatha's Mission. Eton has undertaken a district in Hackney. Is it not an encouraging sign of the times, these dear boys denying themselves that they may provide for the spiritual destitution of the London poor?

I shrink from speaking of my late dear Vicar, Mr. Lowder. His death has produced the most wonderful effect on the people. I never saw anything in my life like the crowds of sorrowing poor at his funeral. He was indeed a noble Saint of GOD with whom it was a great privilege to have laboured.

Your affectionate and grateful friend,

ROBERT LINKLATER.

THE MISSION HOUSE,  
COWLEY ST. JOHN, OXFORD,  
*February 17, 1881.*

"But GOD'S work and Will for His servant," says the brother priest with whom he had worked from 1873 to 1880, was not that which he planned for himself, and after two years at Cowley he returned to parochial work.

But at Cowley itself he did not fail, as wherever he passed, to leave his mark.

Not long since I accidentally came across a dear old lady who in youth had been a worker in one of the mission districts served by the Brothers at Cowley, and she remarked that the evening services conducted then by Brother Linklater were those looked forward to most eagerly by both the poor folk and the workers, who, if fortunate enough to get even a passing word of encouragement from the enthusiastic Missionary, went on their way cheered and hopeful.

There were those who professed to be greatly astonished at his making trial of what technically is termed the "Religious life," amazed, if not shocked, at his leaving Cowley, as if there had been undue haste, indiscretion, or lack of consistency in his conduct.

No one who had the privilege of knowing Robert Linklater could make any such mistake, and the Church owes a deep debt of gratitude to the saintly Founder gifted with discrimination to recognize that there are diversities of gifts, and differences of vocation, and to dismiss the laughter-loving, lovable Irishman from the novitiate. GOD had work for him to do elsewhere, and on other lines.

When one heard of some of the pranks once played upon the staid brethren, Father Benson's decision occasioned no surprise. I quote the remarks of an old friend of his :

"There was amazement and amusement among his friends when he went to Cowley for the novitiate. Then it was that he sacrificed his pride, his magnifi-

cent black beard. Father Benson, I believe, said that no man without humour could easily be made a good Religious, but there are different sorts of humour. Robert Linklater used to tell stories of his experience, full of tender love and reverence for his former superiors, but sufficient to explain why he did not pass the novitiate."

His dearest friend, in commenting upon this episode, said to me, "Almost the greatest sorrow and grief he ever had was when Father Benson told him he was not fitted for Cowley. It was an awful blow to him, but the Founder frankly told him he would do a greater work for GOD and the Church as an independent Missionary." For him to have to conform to the life of a monk would be like the "trunk of a tree with its branches lopped off." And his friend remarked: "We can quite understand what Father Benson meant, and the discrimination that actuated his decision with regard to his novice."

We insert here the letter written by the Father Founder to his novice on his leaving Cowley :

*July 12, 1882.*

MY DEAR LINKLATER,

I hope you will feel that in the outward separation which your departure involves there is no diminution of sympathy on the part of any of us who remain in the Community. Your residence with us for the last two years has been a great joy to us, and especially to myself, and although I do certainly feel that it is much more for your own spiritual benefit and usefulness that you should undertake the organization of some independent Mission work, yet we shall always

be one in heart, and you must not imagine that anything has happened during these two years to lessen the affection which has so long bound us together.

Wherever you are you must still look upon Cowley as a Home, and claim a cell here whenever you need rest or refreshment.

Ever yours in CHRIST,

R. M. BENSON.

Some of his earliest religious impressions, as the Missioner delighted to relate, had been gathered from the Lent sermons preached in early days at All Saints', Margaret Street, by Canon Carter, then Rector of Clewer, whom he greatly revered; and he encouraged many of those in whom he discerned the vocation to seek in the Community founded by Canon Carter at Clewer the fulfilment of their call to the Religious life. Possibly something of the same spirit of considerate lovingness, which was so distinctive a mark of the saintly character of that venerable Founder, may then have been infused into the young Priest, and the spark, falling upon congenial soil, kindled the fire which in later years made him the power he was in the Evangelistic work in the Church.

One of his oldest friends writes :

"There was a good deal of the Irishman in him—of the Irishman that bubbles with fun; there was not a little of the irrepressible, an occasional touch of the Irish antipopy, an element of inconsequence that led to sudden turns of conduct, baffling and sometimes

disconcerting, but always delightful. He has been known to send a note to one of his colleagues while the Second Lesson was being read, with the intimation, 'You must preach; I can't.' It was not pure wilfulness; he was troubled at this time with an affection of the heart which caused sudden fits of depression with a feeling of incapacity. From these he would recover with equally disconcerting suddenness. Immediately after such an attack he would be at the height of his humour."

A man of athletic frame and splendid physique, who, when he began work at Wapping, admitted that he did not know what it meant to feel tired or out of sorts, had in later life to pay the penalty for reckless defiance of all the laws of health and common sense which prevailed in those days at St. Peter's Clergy House.

Like Father Lowder himself, the early neglect of the needs of the body cost him dear, for nature had her revenge. The training in the Novitiate at Cowley, felt in those days by a normal person to be very severe, completed what eleven years at Wapping had begun, and Father Linklater left Cowley with a constitution, originally remarkably strong and healthy, permanently weakened. All who knew him were aware that it was no uncommon occurrence for him, after a hard day's or any strenuous exertion, to be too completely incapacitated by agonizing headache to lift his head from the pillow. Work was out of the question until sleep restored him, and this was when in his prime.

## CHAPTER V

### HAWARDEN—LANDPORT

ON leaving Cowley, Mr. Linklater went, at the invitation of the Rev. Stephen Gladstone (the son of the then Prime Minister), to work at Hawarden, where he attracted the attention of Mr. Gladstone, who was much struck by his week-night sermons to the miners who thronged to hear them.

His name first became known to the public through Miss Trench's "Life of Father Lowder," with which the Prime Minister was much impressed, especially the part written by Father Linklater, and he purchased many copies for distribution amongst his friends.

On his first arrival at Hawarden Clergy House he was received by the Rev. Willoughby Carter, with whom a long and devoted friendship followed. Mr. Carter tells the story of his first meeting thus: "My first personal acquaintance with Robert Linklater was going down to meet him at a little wayside station, which is the nearest railway approach to Hawarden. He burst out of the train and almost rushed into my arms, exclaiming that he had a dreadful headache. In a few moments we were driving towards Hawarden Castle. I delivered a message from Mrs. Gladstone inviting him to dine that night at the Castle, but he

protested his absolute inability (owing to the headache) to do so. We merely called at the Castle, and went on to the Clergy House. He remained there about six months, and during that time performed some of the most remarkable work of his life. Although suffering from those dreadful attacks of headache to which he was subject for many years, and which almost prostrated him, he would ascend the pulpit in the parish church, and for an hour entrance a crowded congregation of miners, who hung upon his every word. Never had the miners attended Hawarden Church as they did on those famous evenings, and Mr. Gladstone, who was often there, formed the very highest opinion of Father Linklater's powers as a preacher."

He remained there until 1882, when, at the request of Dr. Ridding, Headmaster of Winchester, he accepted the invitation to start the Winchester College Mission in the slums of Portsmouth.

My first introduction to him was when Priest-in-charge of this Mission. I was his guest in the little house at Landport which lay amidst some of the worst streets of the place. The sights and sounds, especially on Saturday nights, were to anyone unacquainted with slum-life alarming in the extreme; but it was an experience which gave his guests a good idea of the condition of things and the people amongst whom this devoted priest and his most unselfish wife, the brave and constant helper in all his later life's work, were content to pass the earlier days of their married life. This was the beginning of his great

work, accomplished while he was in the fulness of his powers, at St. Agatha's, Landport. He began in an upper room, and gradually developed the organization until a temporary church was built and money collected with which to start the permanent church.

He gathered round him some eminent clergy, the most noteworthy amongst them being the Rev. E. W. Sergeant, Fellow of Balliol and one of the most popular House-masters at Winchester College, who gave up his work there to help the Mission at Landport under Mr. Linklater. The Rev. Gordon Wickham also threw himself into the work, besides many devoted lay-helpers from Southsea and places round Portsmouth. Here it was he met his future wife, the daughter of Major-General Sir William Crossman, of Cheswick and Holy Island, Northumberland, Unionist M.P. for Portsmouth, and at that time Commanding Officer of the Royal Engineers for the Southern District.

Having laid foundations and prepared the way for his successor, another Irishman, he left in 1885, when appointed to the care of a large London parish, for which he was selected by the discernment of Mr. Gladstone.

On beginning his work at Landport, the Missioner makes the following entry in his diary, and we will take up the narrative in his own words :

"*December, 1882.*—To-day I leave London for my work at Portsea. After twenty years of the hardest toil, really unsparing Missionary effort, I am at last a Vicar—but a Vicar without a church, a house, or a

school. I suppose my parish is the poorest district in all Portsea, and from what I have seen of it many of the streets are as poor as the most poor in Wapping, and possibly as wicked.

"I left London on a miserably cold morning and in a dense fog. The aspect of the streets, as seen through the windows of my 'growler,' was not encouraging, and the cold froze the very marrow of my bones. Besides, I was only just out of a sick-bed, and not fit for the journey. My ten-days' mission at Helmsley, only over on Tuesday morning, and the long railway-journey down south, had quite knocked me up, but I had made up my mind to be amongst my people on Advent Sunday, and GOD gave me strength sufficient to accomplish it."

## CHAPTER VI

### LANDPORT—WINCHESTER COLLEGE MISSION,

“MANY years of toil have robbed me of the physical strength necessary for such work as lay before me, but perhaps this the better helped me to yield up my weakness to the strength of GOD, and to practise faith and realize that it is GOD the HOLY GHOST who, in the person of His unworthy Priest, has to win the souls CHRIST died to save. The conflict within my own heart was as the tender yearning of the HOLY GHOST to draw my dear people into the full fellowship of the Church of CHRIST—no unmeaning vacant sentiment, but the HOLY SPIRIT as a present Person actually transmitted in the Apostolical succession working through its Sacraments and Ministry, wrestling against the powers of evil.

“I myself am but a small factor in the human expression of this force, but solemn thoughts possessed my soul in entering (feeling my own weakness) on my first cure of souls. I felt ashamed of my depression, and yet I suppose the sorrow purified my soul, and brought me nearer to the Crucified. And is it not merciful of GOD that one’s heart so soon forgets the most bitter anguish?

“At Winchester I was greatly cheered by the kind

reception given me by the boys and Masters. I lunched at Dr. Ridding's, and met some of the senior boys. At 3.30 we had our meeting in the library, which was well filled—indeed, quite full to the doors. One of the House-masters, the Rev. E. W. Sergeant, came," as the diary records a week later, December 8, "to look over the place.

"He is a grand fellow, and he is giving up his house at Winchester College that he may undertake Mission Parish work, and he is coming next May to help me here. I have been looking for a house, for we propose to live together, and he is going to send down a lot of things we are likely to want in furnishing. We had to talk out plans, and go through the district and examine possible sites for a church, and I had several to show him ranging from prices like £2,800 to £900." But I am forestalling events, and must take up the Missioner's account of his introductory meeting at the school.

"I tried to make the boys understand that a Mission did not depend on the outward machinery, or on the man as man; but on the fact that the man is a member of CHRIST, and His chosen representative in this work, sent by the HOLY GHOST through the Bishop of the Diocese.

"This came home to them, for more than seventy had been confirmed the day before, and I asked them to remember me at the Altar the next day, when nearly the whole school received the Blessed Sacrament with those newly confirmed.

"I told them that this Mission work would be a mockery in the eyes of GOD unless it meant that they

themselves meant to live more true to the Grace they had received.

"One dreads to take the secrets of GOD or of one's own soul to the light, for fear of boasting or vain-glory; but though a difficult task, it seems right to try and give some account of the work attempted by this Mission for the sake of those whose name it bears, who take so real and personal an interest in it—those young and generous hearts who, by their prayers day by day before the Throne of grace, help our feeble efforts. I feel lifted out of myself and above any temptation to boastfulness as I realize my partnership with them, and that through their prayers I may become an instrument, however unworthy, for the exercise of the great forces of GOD'S grace.

"Before leaving Winchester, which I did at 8 p.m., I went to see dear old Dean Bramston, and received his blessing, which with tears in his eyes he gave me."

'Dean Bramston had often visited him at St. Peter's, and took the keenest interest in his work there.

"I reached Portsmouth between nine and ten that night.

"I had made the boys laugh by describing the situation and farewell conversation I had had with my old grandmother, aged ninety-seven.

"'Who will take care of you?' said she. 'No one,' said I. At this she threw up her hands, for she still thinks that I am incapable of taking care of myself. 'Do the people respect you?' said she. 'What people?' said I. 'Where you are going, to be sure,' said she. 'I don't know where I am going to,' said I,

which was literally true, for I had no idea where I should sleep that night!

"On arrival at Portsmouth I found that Mr. Edgar Jacob, the Vicar of Portsea (afterwards Bishop of S. Albans), had kindly provided me with a lodging, and I drove at once to take possession.

"I passed a sleepless night, but was up early to begin my work and life in this new sphere by making my Communion at the Altar of the parish church of All Saints', from which our district is taken—an official act to show that I was not seeking to work in my own strength, preach another Gospel, or lay a new foundation, but that it was in being in communion with the Church, which is the LORD'S Body, that I went forth to minister to CHRIST'S flock.

"I did not forget to try and realize what I had said to the boys. I came as the Ambassador of CHRIST to the people who are specially my own; that CHRIST is in me, that the HOLY GHOST is pleased to make use of me as His unworthy instrument, poor earthen vessel in myself, but which contains the Power of GOD. GOD knows what I thought and what I prayed that Advent Sunday. It was a comfort and privilege to get this service, which was quiet and reverent, although the Priest took the North end and the ablutions were not taken (at least, not at the Altar). There were about twenty communicants, but these seemed lost in the great church, which would hold sixteen or seventeen hundred.

"At 11 a.m. I had my first interview with the Vicar, Mr. Churchill, whom I found most kind and cordial. He welcomed me in the kindest manner; he told me

I might use his church whenever and for whatever I liked (rather a wide margin), and of his own accord offered to let me have an early Celebration every Sunday. This in itself will be something, for at present there are only two Celebrations in the month. He took me round the district, into the schools, and showed me the limits of my parish. I went back with him to the Vestry, and asked him for his blessing.

"I am deeply impressed by his great kindness, and hope that my coming may strengthen the Church in his parish, and comfort and encourage his heart; poor man! he has been crushed by debt, for he made himself responsible for the building of the magnificent chancel of his church, subscriptions failed, and he has been crippled ever since.

"From the first he put me in charge of his Sunday-schools, and from a small beginning I have been permitted to see a very large increase in the number of teachers and scholars. We have now a staff of seventeen teachers in the boys' school, where I found only three; and with girls and infants of All Saints' and my Mission together we now number some nine hundred children.

"I went to the 11 o'clock service at St. Michael's, Mr. Shute's church. There was a large congregation and a capital number of men; the singing was very good; Mr. Shute preached a most impressive sermon. After Matins there was a choral Celebration, but the bulk of the congregation poured out, leaving some ten men and a lot of women.

"In the afternoon I set to work in good earnest to visit my people and invite them to the Mission service

that night. It is a tremendous experience, this going for the first time to people one does not know, and yet who are most sacredly one's own. The awful suspense of the few minutes one has to stand outside shivering on the door-step (it was raining all the time), considering the kind of reception one will meet with, and thinking of the lives within! We Messengers of the LORD ought to pray more in visiting, and make our visit in the spirit of prayer. I tried to pray at each door before I knocked, and how it came into one's heart, the solemnity of the invitation! Now I found out what a really poor parish it was; some of the houses were quite as poor as any at Wapping. I went to about forty houses, and was generally most kindly received, and a great many promised to come to our service. I went back full of the most hopeful anticipations, although from sad experience I know that one must not trust in promises. Only six adults turned up in a great big room capable of holding hundreds; no fire, not much gas, and a cold wind blowing a gale through the open ventilator and cutting one to pieces.

"The Vicar of All Saints' had kindly lent us his boys' school until we should acquire a Mission-room of our own. It is a big, barnlike structure, capable of holding some six hundred persons, not in very good repair—indeed, in wet weather the rain used to come in from the broken roof. Now we have re-roofed it, but in spite of all inconvenience and its uninviting appearance, we owe it our affectionate gratitude, for it has been the cradle of our Mission. Its chief inconvenience is that it is not within the limits of our district.

"Fancy this large, uncomfortable room, imperfectly lighted, on a cold winter's night, with only a congregation of six adults and a few children. Yes, that was a facer; but Missionaries must not know discouragements, and I told the six present that they would live to see a great work grow out of such a tiny seed; that the day would come, and it would be a memory to them that they had been present at that first evening service of the Mission, which came literally true, for out of these six people, five are still regular attendants at the Church.

"Two or three rough lads turned up, some quiet fellows, and a lot of big boys belonging to the Sunday-school.

"This was my first service—the Ambassador of GOD presenting his credentials. For a time I felt it would be better to hold our service in a smaller room, and so we moved into the infant-school hard by. It took many weeks before we gathered even a dozen people, but GOD prospered us, and soon the room would not hold our congregation. The first six remained constant worshippers, and we so increased that we were obliged to move back into the larger place.

"In my visiting I found lots of the children unbaptized. As my next Missionary venture, I started a Bible-class; this is always a most useful means of educating the people. We have been reading the Acts of the Apostles, and one could not have chosen a better subject—a wonderful help and encouragement to oneself in the work we have to do; a most

useful vehicle for teaching the people the elementary truths of the Church Organization and Faith.

"I think our choir was the next stage of Missionary development. From a very small beginning, a boy here and a boy there, we have grown into a large choir of twenty-seven boys and six men. Some of our boys have been with us from the very beginning. A kind friend in Southsea lent us an American organ for our services, and I engaged a parishioner to be our organist. Our singing, although rough, is very hearty, and it has associated many families in our work, and their children thus belong to us.

"When well established, Lady Laura Ridding kindly invited the boys to Winchester one lovely day in the summer, and entertained them right royally. Such a dinner! such games! such a tea! It was indeed a day to be remembered."

But this is a digression, and we must return to the priest's account of building up the Mission, his strenuous "spade-work."

"*Monday, December 4.*—I visited a sick man, whom I had been asked to see. I found that he was a pious Baptist, but he longs for Unity. I tried to explain to him Our LORD'S prayer for Unity, and that Unity must be in the one Body of the Church. I prayed with him, then he prayed after me, and asked a blessing on my work. May GOD grant him to me as the first-fruits of my work.

"*Tuesday.*—The third sleepless night since my arrival. I got up and went to Celebration at St. Michael's, then said the Hours, which I mean to do

daily, then Matins, after which I wrote my Letter to the inhabitants of my District. The division of the parish is impending, but not as yet a fact. Mr. Churchill took me to see the infant-school, which I am to have for the future Mission services, a smaller and snugger room than the boys'-school. It is a great thing that Mr. Churchill has been able to hold his own against the board-schools, for in the other parishes I fancy the Church-schools have been given up. I like him for this, and asked him how he did it. He said it came out of his own pocket.

"I had an interesting talk with a poor man whose house I visited, as his child was sick and 'unbaptized.' He began by saying, 'No one has ever come to tell us if there is such a place' (as the Church or heaven). This is the second time I have heard this in this street. Then we got on a little further. I believe he will come round.

"I ought to place on record how I have been impressed with the scene each night in the Commercial Road, which runs through my district. It is most thickly populated—thronged. It is an awful scene; more outwardly decent than Ratcliffe Highway, but meaning the same thing. Alas! such crowds of young girls, and soldiers and sailors. One could not stem the tide on the pavement, and I had to walk along the road. There was no drunkenness. It was a very awful sight. At the corner of Charlotte Street there is a waste piece of ground which is let out for the purpose of a fair, and is thronged with soldiers and girls. The noise of the organ attached to the merry-go-round is going on all the evening. I had scarcely

escaped from its most screeching din when I fell in with the Advance Guard of the Salvation Army, four women walking backwards and beating tambourines, and a small number of young women and young lads marching four deep after them. What a picture of life ! I have just heard a respectable shopkeeper inveighing against the police : ' They would do very well for Sodom.'

" *Wednesday, December 6.*—The first night that I have been able to sleep fairly, but my head's bad again. Till eleven o'clock I gave to my devotions, then took a walk round in the afternoon, screwed up my courage to begin my regular district visiting. The first house I called at the woman was busy, and asked me to ' call again.' The second turned out to be a Baptist stronghold, but such a nice woman from Devonshire. We had a great talk, and her little servant attended my meeting on Sunday night. I shall hope to get them all soon. I then visited many in Hope Street, all glad to see me and all very poor. In the first a family just returned from Ireland, but English people and Church. A nice young sailor's wife in the next, her husband ordered off to sea. A poor struggling woman with a large family, the youngest deformed in the head—' too much brain,' says the doctor. This poor child cries incessantly day and night, never seems to sleep, and the mother has to nurse it continually. How awful are the sufferings of the poor ! I then visited others. How I dread this visiting ! It is all against the grain. My only help is to remember that I am nothing, and that it is the SPIRIT of the FATHER that speaketh in me.

CHRIST in me. I am going straight down the street, house after house. Two cases interested me specially—one a nice middle-aged woman, married, a good homely face; and a sailor just returned from the war. He had been in the Naval Brigade, and had been in a battle. It was most impressive to hear him tell of his Commander, Lieut. Hutchinson, offering up a prayer before he led his troops into action. He was also at the siege of Alexandria. His ship was hit eleven times, and the only man who went on deck to have a look was killed. It was on board this ship that the Officer took up a shell and put it in water; another man did the same, but it has not been noticed or rewarded. I spent more than two hours visiting, and only did some seven houses; it is not much use to visit unless it be done thoroughly.

"It is a wonderful experience to meet the tide of dock-labourers and artisans at dinner-time, as I did to-day—*thousands!* Moody and Sankey are here to-night, but they only admit by ticket, except for sailors and soldiers in uniform. Oh, for Unity!"

This was in one form or other the reiterated cry of the heart of Robert Linklater. Unity, his great desire; and he thirsted for Charity amongst the brethren, outwardly, perhaps, in union. He had been suffering cruelly from constant headache and sleeplessness, and at the end of the week records going up to London in order to see Dr. (afterwards Sir) Andrew Clark.

"*Saturday, December 9.*—Went to Dr. Andrew Clark's. Mrs. Gladstone had taken a wonderful deal of trouble about this; she saw Dr. Clark, and even

wrote to him this morning. What a wonderfully kind Christian she is!

"I returned to Portsmouth, and went round to make sure of communicants for my Early Celebration on Sunday.

"I celebrated at eight at All Saints', my first time of celebrating in Portsmouth. I took the Eastward position, but wore only a surplice. There were four communicants—or three!

"At 9.30 I went to Sunday-school, such a miserable affair. The big room, and only a handful of boys, and the teachers all late. I took the big boys' class, and by GOD'S mercy soon gained their attention—such nice, dear boys, so grateful for a little care! I invited six of them to tea at 5.30.

"At eleven I went to All Saints'. The service is of the Cathedral type; a very large choir of boys who behaved badly, and some six or eight men who were, I thought, most irreverent. The singing was very good of its kind; the church miserably empty.

"The Vicar asked me to preach, and although I had prepared no sermon, I would not refuse the invitation, and preached on the Mission of St. John the Baptist, and drew out the parallel of Zacharias' prayer, and the answer—a *child*; and the Vicar's anxiety for his own poor, and the answer—this Mission from the boys of Winchester."

The year went on, and the Priest writes: "My first important sermon was delivered in All Saints' Church on the last night of the year 1882. I suppose there were two thousand persons present, and one was able to lay before them the programme for the New Year—

daily Matins and Evensong, and an Early Celebration every Sunday. These are specially the services of the Winchester College Mission, and I am responsible for them. It was a very striking scene, and one that most powerfully appealed to my heart—this great church, such a desolate wilderness, packed to the roof with living souls; the last night of the old year (and therefore too late to mend except by way of repentance), the first few minutes of the New, and all its wonderful possibilities of improvement!

“As the Lord Bishop of Winchester had given notice of a Confirmation to be held in Lent, I set to work early in the year to collect my candidates. I prepared eighty for the sacred Rite. A great many of them had not been baptized. It is perfectly awful, the way in which the Sacraments of the Church have been neglected in past years. One finds this, alas! as far as the Holy Communion is concerned, in other places; but with regard to Holy Baptism I have never experienced a similar state of things in any other place—not even in East London. However, it is a grand opportunity for Mission work, and one is able to begin *de novo* with one's neophytes, not merely in teaching them, but as an actual fact that after Baptism they are ‘new creatures’ in CHRIST JESUS, and their sins have been washed away. ‘Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins.’

“It is indeed a glorious chance, and may GOD give me force to train up the new lives of these my spiritual children.

“Of course, as I was single-handed, it was an immense labour to prepare so many. On several days of

each week I was engaged with them from three o'clock in the afternoon till past ten at night, with sometimes no leisure to eat. I really was not strong enough for such a sustained mental and physical effort, but GOD supported me, and I held on to the Confirmation, and then on to Easter, before I broke down completely.

"During Lent, 1882, I preached on Sunday evenings in All Saints' to very large and increasing congregations, more than a thousand, on these nights rushing over for the sermon after I had finished my own Mission service. The severe effort it cost me at the end of a hard day's work told greatly. On Good Friday I preached the Three-Hours' Service in All Saints' Church, when about seven hundred people were present—the first time that service has been held there. I need not here allude to the fearful storm of opposition that burst forth immediately after Easter."

The Missioner is here alluding to the unwarrantable attack made upon him by the local newspapers, the abuse poured forth from the organs of the Press; and, as he says in his diary: "The cruelty of the attack that was then made upon me prostrated me more than the fatigue of my work."

"The glorious rallying of the soldiers of the Cross on Easter Day was a challenge that the enemy would not disregard, so from the enemies of the Church—the Baptists and Dissenters, and certain other fanatics—there arose a persecution which raged for several months. I blush to write that the attack was planned and fostered by a clergyman of our Church."

The local papers were full of the vilest personal abuse of the Winchester College Missioner, "the most sacred verities of our holy religion were dragged into the Press, but it is not worth the writing all they said or did. The malcontents approached the Bishop to ask him to remove me; the storm has now spent its strength, and never can revive. They have fired their shot, and the only result has been to deepen the spiritual life of those who joined us, and to range most loyally on our side the poor of our own district."

The Missioner had spent himself all through Lent as well as earlier in the year ploughing up the soil, visiting, teaching his people, and, as he says, "No time could have been better spent, no labour more profitable; here, indeed, I was permitted to lay the solid foundations of a Mission, and thoroughly enjoyed the delightful time I spent in teaching and guiding these most willing hearts. How can I write of these my children who then accepted my teaching as from GOD, and who ever since have nerved my heart and encouraged me by the example of their beautiful and holy lives?"

"It is one of the great joys a Missioner is privileged to know, and which compensates for any amount of labour or abuse—the intense delight of seeing the unfolding of GOD'S grace in the daily development of the spiritual lives of GOD'S children. It came quite naturally, when the Confirmation was over, that we should resolve ourselves into a Guild. It seemed a pity to break up our classes, and disperse those who for so many weeks had been associated in the most

sacred bonds, and who had been drawn into new friendship. I the more gladly availed myself of the opportunity in that thus I should be able to continue my teaching, and encourage them to persevere.

"We had some thirty-seven men and lads in our Guild; about the same number of women."

When at Landport, the Missioner founded large middle-class Borough schools of from three hundred to four hundred children, boys and girls, taught by excellent and loyal teachers. These he carried on himself after leaving St. Agatha's, to prevent their dissolution, as his successor did not see his way to continue them.

After a few years, with the increasing cares and responsibilities of his own parish in London, to his great grief he found himself compelled to give them up.

Dr. Linklater, as may be seen by his own account of his work, exercised a wide influence wherever he went, and not confined only or solely to the limits of his own immediate parish; neighbouring churches felt his power, and others were helped by his courage and sympathy.

This it was which in so many places in which he worked drew his brother priests so frequently to resort to him for help and guidance in their difficulties.

On the occasion of the Missioner's death, Father Tremenheere, then at St. Frideswide's, Oxford, who in earlier life had himself had charge of the Landport Mission, thus wrote, saying: "All of us who knew him will greatly miss him. Cheerful and full of life,

such a valiant soldier of the Cross, and, above all, one who, as I have reason to know, made an indelible mark at St. Agatha's, and left there foundations well and truly laid, which have endured, and enabled us, who came after, to carry on the work. There are still many there who owe much to him, and remember him with gratitude."

One of these who owed much to the Missioner's teaching, and was amongst his band of loyal workers, and to this day works as Sunday-school Superintendent at St. Agatha's, thus endorses Mr. Tremenhoe's remarks. She says: "He (Dr. Linklater) will ever live here in loving hearts. The wonderful good he did here, the many, many souls he won to GOD—how great now his reward, how bright his crown will be! How many a soul saved, which without him and his untiring zeal would have been lost!"

What had been said of him at St. Peter's was echoed at Landport. "The results of his loving work for GOD and His Holy Faith, the effect and influence of his saintly life, will never die. Many of his old children are left, and while there is one, there always will go up to the Throne of Grace prayers and thanksgivings for his message of GOD'S mercy, the Light of His Love, which he brought to many a dark home in our dismal courts and alleys."

## CHAPTER VII

### CHARACTERISTICS

"My strength is as the strength of ten,  
Because my heart is pure."

ROBERT LINKLATER might fitly be described as a champion of the faith, and he may be said to have looked the part.

The lithe, loose-built figure upright and alert; the keen eyes which could with equal readiness flash wrath or mirth, wit or scorn; the bright smile so attractive to all, winning the hearts of the young at a glance, all seemed expressive of the character of their possessor.

With pride he one day drew my attention to a portrait of his mother which revealed her as an exceptionally beautiful woman, of very graceful carriage, in whom it was not difficult to trace the resemblance to himself.

The veneration of a good man for his mother is a very beautiful trait in any noble character; it was a striking feature in that of the Missioner, who was imbued with the reverence for women, the chivalrous instinct characteristic of the son of a good mother.

He so entirely believed in the goodness of human nature that he rarely failed to draw the best out of all men, and, where it may have been lacking, implanted

the love of virtue, the desire after better things, in all sorts and conditions.

At various periods of his life he moved amongst those of very different social grades and of completely opposite modes of thought, of spiritual capacity, and appreciation, counting amongst his friends men and women, boys and girls of almost every age, rank, and profession.

That which the poor, fallen girl, the ex-convict haunting the slums of the seaport town, found him to be, he was equally to those in high life: the Priest, eager and ready to save; but not the Priest only—the CHRIST-like man, the self-forgetting friend, true and tender, of human heart, unfailing sympathy, never harsh, but ever strong, full of pity for their weakness, wickedness, and folly, unwearying in his efforts to heal and raise them from their degradation.

It was characteristic of his own delightfully generous nature that it seemed impossible for Robert Linklater to enjoy any pleasure in which he could not draw others to share, and those with eyes to see could not fail to read the heart of the Priest consumed with the desire to bring others to taste that for which his own soul was athirst.

The heart of the Missioner yearned over the "fallen," and longed to lead back in "green pastures" the lost, to bring all the dark, cheerless lives of the godless within the bright circle of Divine love and mercy. "Make people happy," was a favourite axiom of his, "and you will help them to be good."

Few men could have had wider experiences or been

better able to appreciate the danger, which so often he must have seen demonstrated, of the evil effects of "spoiling" the young, and thus marring the soul that might have been beautiful. It may have been just because the Priest knew this so well that it made him so keenly alive to an opposite evil, that which springs from an atmosphere of repression, the lack of encouraging influences; the chill of disappointment that over-spreads many a young heart failing to find sympathy where it might properly be looked for; the frigidity of uncongenial companionship, which engenders hardness, and makes many a man grow cold and cynical, and overshadows lives that should be not only bright but fruitful.

It is by no means easy for those conspicuous for sincerity not sometimes to be severe, even harsh, and extraordinarily difficult not to wax impatient, and judge unfairly the people whose faults offend our taste; but the Priest, so strong an advocate of integrity, who hated a lie and detested any sort of affectation, was unfailingly considerate, never anything but kind.

Lives of men may be wrecked through self-indulgence and lack of discipline, and who could have had greater personal experience of the gravity of these evils than the Missioner, to whom the secrets of so many lives must have been unfolded. But he knew, on the other hand, that no soul can be reached, no heart won, save through the power of Divine Charity. And many a man (he could have told the tale), untouched by anything else, has been converted by a kind word.

Doubtless he felt that the milk of human kindness, like the mother's milk to her babe, is wonderfully nourishing to the normal soul, and few obstinate sinners are long able to hold out against its softening influence.

He made it his business to teach all with whom he came in contact how to get the best out of life, and showed many that in spite of its limitations life was indeed "worth living," showed them how to make the best of what might possibly be dull surroundings, and also how to enliven the daily round for their neighbours.

Every state and normal life offers opportunities for small pleasures, little alleviations to lighten the burden of toil or care; but it needs the instinct of the kindly heart to discover or to make use of these.

It is the man of sympathetic mind alone who has patience to weigh the little things which, far more than the big matters, affect the comfort and joy of life for most of us, and carry in their train the oil which makes the wheels of the machine run smoothly.

Robert Linklater, with whom it seemed impossible either to drop out of sight or suffer others to forget the deeper aspirations of the soul, the greatest realities of life, was never lacking in unselfish care and thoughtfulness over the merest trifles, was never one to despise the profit to be drawn from the smallest distractions which contribute to relieve the monotony of an uninteresting course. Ardent in the pursuit of the greatest, he threw himself more keenly than most into the enjoyment of the lighter sides of life; simple

pleasures that so much enhance the joy of living, possessed for him, pre-eminently simple in taste and habits, a very real charm.

Few could appreciate the beauties of nature as did the man of heart so pure, yet so entirely human, that it was a real privilege to be allowed the opportunity of sharing happy holidays with one who understood so wisely the wholesome art, sometimes despised in this age of bustling activity, of making leisure to recreate.

On these occasions his bright, buoyant gladness of spirit was as some refreshing breeze, and acted like an invigorating tonic on the worn and weary.

The generous heart, which seemed never able to forget a kindness, had no memory for personal injuries, slights, or insults (and he had been privileged to bear both); these appeared to pass unnoticed by him; but people who knew him best would mark with what specially courteous grace he would make a point of greeting those whose unkindness had wounded him to the quick.

Without affectation, and still less without insincerity, he would meet them with his habitual frank cordiality, as genuinely pleased, apparently, to see them as if they had never shown themselves other than friendly.

I have known him put himself to the greatest personal inconvenience for the sake of doing some kindness to those who had wilfully and deliberately caused him pain. "He kept, I think, ever in his mind," said a dear friend of his, "the realization of

the truth that those who sought to injure him were still, in spite of their cruelty, GOD'S children, and therefore he never lost sight of the other nobler side of their nature, nor of their possibilities."

High and low, rich or poor, he looked upon them all alike in the same light, and saw what at their best they were capable of becoming.

His winning manner and merry smile endeared him naturally to the young, and captivated a large circle of juvenile friends, who will recall the birthday-parties he graced so happily, which, though he might be able to spare but a few minutes to look in upon the young people, were, without his presence, never considered complete.

Wherever he passed, dulness was impossible and stiffness unimaginable.

No man had less idea of self-importance than he; anything savouring of parsonic stiffness annoyed him exceedingly; but, never lacking in dignity, it would have been impossible for anyone to take liberties with him; none could forget that which he himself remembered—*what* he was, the faithful shepherd, the loving father of the flock committed to his care, but also the ambassador of a Great King.

As Priest, his Mission was not only to point to the Church as the Bethesda in which the miseries of men find cure, but he tried to show them that the world itself, GOD'S fair earth likewise, was to become a sphere of health and blessing, the wonder-working temple in which men, as living stones, are to make it their business to hallow His Name, and human lives,

natural selfishness and greed overcome, and lawlessness converted into loveliness, character inspired by Divine beauty, built up to show forth His Glory, and to adorn the world.

Throughout his ministry, as he laboured to convert the bad into good, and led the good to seek the highest, Robert Linklater seemed inflamed with the joyous spirit of the Gospel. As he opened up the paths of righteousness and pointed to the beauty of holiness, he seemed as he flung open the gates to exhibit the glory of the kingdom, and to be perpetuating the festal character of the first miracle. In human ways and simplest methods he led you to aim high, and his very gladness of spirit cheered you on to rest content with nothing short of the best. His "goings" dispelled gloom, and where he passed dulness vanished.

## CHAPTER VIII

### APPOINTMENT TO A LONDON PARISH

FROM Portsea the Missioner was, in 1885, called to the charge of Holy Trinity, Stroud Green, a large parish in North London with a population of ten thousand souls, consisting mainly, if not entirely, of business men and their families of the middle class.

The Prime Minister, Mr. Gladstone, recognized in him the very man (as after-events proved) needed to remove prejudice, to teach and uphold the Church's Faith and practice in a district the very reverse of Catholic.

The appointment was undoubtedly a bold venture, for the church had been of the ultra-Protestant type, and Evening Communions customary. Any man who had been a fellow-worker with a Priest holding the views professed by Father Lowder must, so his opponents vehemently asserted, be a Roman Catholic at heart, and neither a Papist nor a Puseyite Priest would be suffered to abide peaceably at Stroud Green.

The storm that greeted the news of the new Vicar's appointment was of so violent a character that it was hardly to be wondered at that he contemplated resigning the charge, and would have done so had it not been for the advice of such eminent men as Canon

Liddon and Father Benson, who urged him to hold on. As his guest at the little house on the hill (the Vicarage was not then built), I was amongst those who had the opportunity of witnessing the violent and aggressive kind of opposition which assailed his incoming. The turmoil which greeted his arrival was tremendous. Stones were flung at his windows, missiles hurled into the garden, abusive letters and articles poured from the local Press. Letters, addresses (some of so vile and scurrilous a character that I was warned to avoid reading any paper that I might chance to find in the hall), pushed into the letter-box or thrust under the front door.

Animosity and bitterness, which never fail to spring up wherever religious controversy is raised, were rife. Calumny, furious malignity (although none who knew him could be unaware of how these things cut a man of Robert Linklater's nature to the heart), were borne with unruffled calm, the serenity of real charity.

The new Vicar was careful to let it be known that he refrained from reading the names of those who signed any of these offensive documents, lest, should his opponents have cause to change their mind or alter their views as time went on, a feeling of shame might prevent reconciliation or make them afraid to meet their parish Priest.

Large-minded, tender-hearted himself, so careful to hurt none, to be fair to all, few could guess how deep were the wounds inflicted by the hands of those who set themselves as his enemies to oppose the Vicar of whom they knew so little, beyond that he was what is

termed an "extreme man," and for whom in consequence they considered no treatment too vindictive, no abuse too violent.

The Priest had learnt, perhaps first at St. Peter's, through his connection with Father Lowder, how to meet controversy, and again at Portsmouth he had had experience of misconception which proved valuable. He knew what it was to stand on the unpopular side, and his experience of opposition was to be crowned now that he was called to take up the care of a parish in a district eminently anti-Catholic.

Nothing was too bad for the man who had been, during ten years of his ministry, the colleague of a Priest whose views were so well known as those of Father Lowder; no invectives too fierce to hurl at the head of the devoted Priest, whose only desire was to obey the Master's call, his one aim to promote the glory of GOD.

With unflinching front he prepared himself for the work, and met his foes.

When he preached his first sermon at Stroud Green on the day of his Induction, at which I was present, the church was thronged. Dauntless, as their Leader, the Vicar then appealed to his people, and most pathetic was the appeal, which stirred many a heart in that vast concourse, as their Pastor implored his hearers to bear themselves as Christians, as men, not as cowards. His words showed the stuff of which the new Vicar was made, and were not without their effect.

One of the oldest inhabitants of Stroud Green,

whose husband was a Sidesman before the coming of Dr. Linklater, and afterwards became his Churchwarden for many years, until, in fact, they left the place, writes :

"We were privileged to be living at Stroud Green when the Vicar was appointed. It is not necessary to go into particulars as to the way the appointment was received, or the opposition then provoked. We had no notion of the meaning of the Catholic Faith, but happily we were not blinded by prejudice, and for ourselves we asked GOD'S guidance as to the course we should pursue, for many of our friends and fellow-worshippers had left the Church hastily, and, as they afterwards found, without reason.

"In the Providence of GOD, and, as it seemed, in answer to our prayers, we resolved to remain, and oh ! what a difference it has made in all our lives. It was to us a revelation.

"The Vicarage became a home; the dear inmates the partakers of every joy and sorrow. Sympathy and help were never wanting; our children felt the same, and though now middle-aged men and women still speak of Dr. Linklater in terms of the greatest love and affection.

"All those who knew him must be the better for it, and even now we feel, 'though dead, he yet speaketh.'"

Time passed, and the storm, which upon the Vicar's arrival had raged so furiously, gradually subsided. It was not long before some of his bitterest opponents laid down their arms and surrendered, for Dr. Linklater set to work to win the resentful, and was amaz-

ingly successful. The surroundings were strange to him. I doubt whether there was in the parish a single person of the artisan or labouring class. It was a Mission, but of another sort than that at Wapping or Landport. New methods were soon learnt. The weapons of his warfare were not carnal, therefore he came off victorious. Fortresses were stormed and strongholds yielded; his assailants, brought face to face with their Vicar, a champion of Peace as well as of Truth, vanquished by his patience, laid down their arms and surrendered.

Hard-headed men of business of the class he found at Stroud Green are not as a rule easy to deal with, but walls of stone and iron gates seemed to yield where Dr. Linklater approached. One middle-aged man who, at his incoming, had been amongst the most virulent of the new Vicar's opponents, and eventually became one of his staunchest supporters, said to me himself, when a few months after the Induction I returned to Stroud Green: "I am not ashamed to confess that I was one of those who most fiercely denounced and opposed the Vicar, and it was only the way he met us, his considerate kindness, his whole bearing as a Christian and a gentleman, which converted me and, I may add, many like myself."

Though he held on his way, and won in the end, it must not be supposed that the Vicar did not have his difficulties, nor was his path all strewn with roses, but the opposition roused by his teaching not infrequently subsided owing to the manner in which it was met.

It may be interesting to see the effect upon a young beginner of the example of his elder brother in the ministry. He writes thus to Mrs. Linklater, on hearing the news of the Prebendary's death: "I was a young deacon when Dr. Linklater was appointed to Stroud Green, and working in the adjoining parish, where I had opportunity of realizing the stress and storm which, in obedience to his faith and convictions, he was at that time called to face. From the very first one heard from friend and foe alike that the new Vicar, whose advent into the neighbourhood had raised so much excitement, possessed a loveableness and affection which were bound to win universal esteem and to bring him through the troubled waters. It was no surprise, therefore, when I took up work in Hornsey five years later, to find his church and services a centre of devotion, faith, and power.

"From that time my esteem quickened into admiration and friendship. . . . When at Hornsey I found him an unfailing friend, and strong, sympathetic counsellor, a most genial and hospitable neighbour. There are thousands who will recall with gratitude the qualities of Robert Linklater."

## CHAPTER IX

### THE PARISH PRIEST

"A word from me was like a charm,  
Ye pulled together with one mind."

DR. LINKLATER was, as his colleagues knew well, most insistent on the duty of visiting. Writing on this subject in Father Lowder's Biography, he says: "Our work at St. Peter's was done entirely by visiting; we made friends with the people in their own homes. It is the fashion nowadays amongst a certain clique of the younger clergy to disparage visiting, and say the people must come to them. I have no patience with those who make a ridiculous theory the cloak for their own incompetence or laziness; had we worked on that principle, St. George's Mission might as well have remained at the West End." And, no doubt, had the Vicar adopted the easy-going, non-visiting principle, he might as well have remained at Portsea for all the good his flock at Stroud Green would have derived by the change. Robert Linklater was never a man to theorize; full of poetry, he was far from being on that account unpractical. You had but to visit his parish and see his parochial organization to correct any misconception on that point.

With untiring zeal and dauntless energy the Vicar

shepherded his flock. Every detail of their lives was weighed and considered; no one was forgotten, no difficulty overlooked. Aided by his unselfish wife, he organized entertainments, inaugurated social gatherings and innocent amusement of all kinds, for young and old alike, thus drawing his parishioners in friendly fellowship together, his cordial sympathy and ready tact removing barriers and overcoming prejudices which to other men of less sanguine temperament or less Christian mind might have appeared insurmountable.

He was a man of great geniality, ready wit, and unbounded enthusiasm, hence his popularity on all hands, even with those who did not see eye to eye with him in all things. In due course a Vicarage was built, and it was Dr. Linklater's proud boast that he had every tree in the garden planted. The gracious hospitality of the Vicarage counted for something, but purely spiritual forces for more.

Born to lead, his trumpet in the day of battle gave no uncertain sound. He touched multitudes, and captivated not a few, for he lived what he preached, and preached what he lived. His bitterest opponents could never affirm that he was anything but fair and thoroughly honest in stating his views.

When truth, however unpalatable, had to be spoken, he never flinched. However much his hearers might disagree with the matter of his teaching, they were quite agreed in asserting that the manner was ever conciliatory.

Some of the old congregation severed their connec-

tion with the church, but others came to take their places. Mr. Linklater's gifts as a preacher and organizer soon told, and a loyal body of worshippers gathered round the new Vicar. He drew a large congregation, who were devoted to him, and he elevated them both socially and religiously.

He was always an excellent draughtsman, with a gift for caricature. His taste was exquisite; he first taught me to understand the art of the eighteenth century. Walking with him one day somewhere in the northern suburbs, I made a remark on the ugliness of a Georgian house. "No, beautiful," he said; "simple, beautiful," and unveiled for me the mysteries of delicacy and proportion. The fashion was not yet setting that way. He did not, however, try to impose his taste on others.

A true Father to his flock, he taught them to find in their church a true home, a real House of Prayer; therefore, though not perhaps architecturally beautiful, big and barnlike as some may have described it, it did not strike one in that aspect. The fragrance of devotion, the prayers of the faithful ever ascending, seemed to hang about the plain walls. With kindly tact and great consideration for the feelings of his people, the Vicar very gradually altered the character of the services, making the Celebration of the Holy Communion the chief service, and giving great attention to the music.

Step by step he led his people to accept in its entirety Catholic doctrine and practice, inculcated sound principles and respect for authority; therefore,

when changes were made, none questioned his right to make them. He advanced boldly, but walked warily, and never sought to introduce innovations without first making it his business to instruct his congregation.

A Home for little girls, in which, loving the young as he did, he took special interest, was one of the parochial works started and mainly carried on through the indefatigable energy of his wife.

Shortly before Dr. Linklater's death, a letter from one of these girls, now a young woman many years in service and doing well, reached me from Australia. She had not forgotten her Confirmation nor her early lessons from the Vicar. "I have," she writes, "a nice photo of the dear Vicar, which I always keep by me, and I do not forget (for I had mentioned his failing health) him in my prayers."

With women he was wise, with men equally he was a power; and no one could attend his church without being struck by what, alas! is often unusual—the number, sometimes the preponderance, of men in the congregation.

And it was not "pulpit oratory" that drew or held them together. Dr. Linklater was not in the technical sense of the word "an eminent preacher," though a Priest such as he never fails to preach eloquently. His voice, though clear and distinct, was never powerful; the exertion required to fill his large church must have been to him tremendous.

He disarmed opposition by the way in which he met his opponents, converting many of his bitterest

enemies into staunchest friends, often by appealing to their better nature, and inviting them to co-operate with him in the furtherance of some benevolent scheme in which he required their support.

Scores of kind people who will gladly and readily give assistance where it is needed find it difficult, if not impossible, to accept, much less claim, assistance. It needs a really humble man to do this. Dr. Linklater was a proficient in the gracious art, and could give or receive help with the same ready grace, and thus taught many a valuable lesson. Essentially practical in his teaching, he ever inculcated obedience to Church authority.

A good illustration of this occurred when, on the occasion of some parochial gathering which demanded a *meat* meal of some sort, the treat, impossible to postpone, happened to fall on a vigil. What was to be done?

The Vicar promptly wrote to the Bishop explaining the difficulty, and asking for his dispensation, which under the circumstances was readily accorded, His Lordship's reply being duly displayed to the guests.

A leading Presbyterian in the parish, a great friend of the Prebendary's, used to say of him: "Dr. Linklater the *man*, I love; Dr. Linklater the Ecclesiastic, I *abhor*." Though large-hearted and broad-minded, he knew him also to be a staunch Catholic, who would never be induced to abate one jot or tittle of English Catholicism in its fullest sense. He claimed for the Church her rightful heritage, and ever insisted

upon very definite teaching; but he had a horror of a sectarian spirit, and showed himself equally friendly with the people who did not attend his church as with those who did, and was as pleased to see them as they were to see him.

It was customary in the Hornsey Rural Deanery to hold a Clerical Dinner once a quarter at the different Vicarages, after which papers were read on religious questions of the day and discussion followed.

Mrs. Linklater tells an amusing story of one that took place at Stroud Green Vicarage. The Vicar gave her the names of nineteen priests as having accepted the invitation on that particular occasion. The table was therefore laid for that number, dinner was announced, and all sat down. Suddenly the bell rang, and Number 20 was announced; presently Numbers 21 and 22 followed. She was getting inwardly frantic, as she knew that every knife and fork and spoon in the house was on the table; besides that, there was no more room. However, she knew her husband would be equal to the occasion, so determined to take no notice, nor to look or see what was going on at the other end of the room, and talked on to the Bishop at her right, and hoped he thought she had expected her guests. How they fared at the other end of the table she never knew, but the Vicar assured her it was "all right." This sort of thing was always happening, for the Vicarage was an open house for everything, and everybody that wanted it, and the Vicar's genial smile and hearty greeting were always ready to welcome them. Every Christmas,

dinners and suppers were given to all the Church officials, churchwardens, and sidesmen. Members of the men's Bible-class, choir-men, servers, each had their own special evening, and very pleasant these dinners and suppers were, and much enjoyed by both host and hostess.

It was quite a usual thing for the table to be laid for twenty-four and twenty-six men.

A year or two before the Prebendary resigned the living, he inaugurated, with the help of the other clergy in the Deanery, a dinner to be held once a year, not only for the Clergy, but he included Dissenting Ministers of all denominations, and started the first by his own invitation at St. Paul's Chapter House, when about forty sat down to dinner. This invitation was returned by the Head of the Baptist Union and other Ministers inviting all the Clergy to breakfast at their headquarters, and this has ever since been carried on, the last one being organized by the Roman Catholic Priest. All this was absolutely characteristic of the Prebendary; his great wish was to bring all of different ways of thinking together in private intercourse. One never heard him disparage or speak against those who saw things differently from himself. At his own dinner at St. Paul's Chapter House he gave a brief address of welcome, and the motto that he imposed on the gathering, "*Ut omnes sint unum*," will not, as one of the newspapers said at the time, soon be forgotten. One of the Dissenting Ministers wrote on hearing of his death: "He was a Father in GOD to many, and to me also."

His friendliness with those of views alien to his own bears witness to a breadth of mind of the right sort, which is generally to be found in one who is absolutely sure of his own position and principles.

As one of his brethren in the Ministry writes: "He was the Priest of the English Church for whom I had, and shall ever retain, feelings of the deepest affection. Many of my brethren I *like*; my late Vicar I *loved*; his memory will ever be treasured by me and mine."

Another says: "Although it is many years since we were neighbours in North London, in those early days the Doctor was always a staunch, loyal, and affectionate friend, to whom I used constantly to turn, as to my elder brother. He helped me in many difficulties, and through many hard times, whilst his cheerfulness and keen sense of humour made him a delightful tonic if one was extra tired or worried."

One of his old Grammar-School boys, a soldier in the artillery, writing from the Tower of London, where he was quartered at the time of the Doctor's death, gives expression to the feelings shared by many: "How thankfully I remember how much I owe to the loving help and friendship of Dr. Linklater over a large number of years! He started me in my public school, and so on to Oxford; but far more than that, his influence and sympathy kindled and kept firm the hope to be ordained. I am only just back from India, and should go to Cuddesdon but for the war, which has put me here. I saw Dr. Linklater shortly before I left for Madras: I am so glad I did."

Another old parishioner writes: "Everybody who

knew him mourns over his passing away. I have many things to be grateful for in the many years I was associated with Holy Trinity, and I am thankful for having had the good fortune to come under the kindly influence of Dr. Linklater."

Most people are tender to the bereaved, kind to the sorrowful, but the Prebendary's power of sympathy was extraordinary, and exceedingly practical. He made his people's joys and griefs his own; those called to suffer knew best, perhaps, the strength and depth of his sympathy. No pains were spared to ease the aching of a lonely heart, and many a time he would come home after a long afternoon's parochial visiting, his mind full of someone bereaved. "Poor Mrs. So-and-So has lost her husband, or her child; we must find something for her to do," and in a short time she would be busy and interested in work for the church or parish of one sort or the other; at any rate, something had been found for her to do which occupied her mind and cheered her loneliness.

None in trouble were ever left by Robert Linklater to fend for themselves; he sought them out, and never rested until he had succeeded in providing (what he accounted the infallible panacea for the sorrowful) something to do for others. It was no easy task that he set himself, but he never left it unaccomplished, and won the lasting gratitude of many a bereaved heart.

## CHAPTER X

### LONDON WORK

DR. LINKLATER, ever specially interested in the young and in questions of education, made himself responsible for a Boys' Grammar-School, and welcomed in his parish the establishment of the Church School Company's School for Girls, in which he regularly gave religious instruction.

The Guild of the Holy Spirit for young women employed in the Post Office he always declared was started by themselves; it was their own idea and their own wish. Two or three of them banded together, and asked him if he would promote it and be their Warden. He was only too pleased to do it, and when he left Stroud Green it numbered four hundred members, with branches all over London, in the Telephone Service, the Postal Order Branch, the National Insurance Office, the Public Trustee's Office, and the Savings Bank Department. Every year they have held their Corporate Communion at St. Paul's Cathedral, and have their monthly meetings with service and address, and their Quiet Days at churches in the neighbourhood of their respective branches.

An extract from a letter written by one of the members is given below: "To no one on earth have I ever given the reverential, grateful love that I had for Dr.

Linklater, the Priest and best friend of all the most impressionable years of my life. He gave me my ideals and aspirations, and will ever live in my grateful heart. May I offer to you " (the letter was to Mrs. Linklater) " the very sincere sympathy of our Guild. We all value our tender recollections of our Founder and first Warden."

The Grammar-School for Boys was the work the Vicar considered the most important in the parish. Though the difficulties and expenses were enormous, nothing would ever induce him to give it up; as long as there was a boy to attend, he would carry it on. It was founded originally for the choir-boys, to give them sound Church teaching, and it became a thorough Secondary School for boys of the neighbourhood whose parents desired for them a good religious education. One of the teachers sends the following graphic account of the work :

" The school was founded by Dr. Linklater soon after he came to the parish, and was held in the old Iron Room, now no more; and it speaks well for the school that the unsuitable character of the building was forgotten by parents, teachers, and boys, in their love and loyalty to the school and its Founder. Only a short time ago I had a letter from one of the old boys, now at the Front, who referred to the building of the new Hall, and remarked regretfully upon the pulling down of the old Iron Room. ' I suppose it had to be,' he said, ' but I'm sorry. I loved the old Iron Room; it was good enough for us, and I should never forget it and the dear old Vicar.'

“As one who was privileged to work for eight years at the Grammar-School right up to the end, I think I may claim the right to know something of the work it did among the boys of Stroud Green, and undoubtedly that work was due to the personality of the Warden, or, as he was always affectionately styled by the boys, the ‘old Vicar.’ Not that they considered him ‘old’ in the accepted sense of the word, but, as is well known by anyone who knows anything of boys, ‘old’ was just a term of affection.

“From the youngest to the oldest, all loved him; his visits always brought a ray of sunshine into the dreary school-room. The whisper would go round, ‘Here’s the Vicar,’ and at once all faces broke into a smile of welcome. No wonder, for had he not always a smile and a joke for each one? Was there anyone who could tell such stories as the Vicar? Over and over again the shout would go up, ‘Please, sir, draw us something on the black-board!’ No matter how busy he might be, he always had time for the boys, and with a courteous ‘May I?’ to the teacher in charge of the class, he would with a few rapid strokes draw one of his inimitable caricatures, which would be treasured for days, and woe betide the boy who cleaned it off! One of the features of the school was the annual entertainment and prize-giving, the prizes always being the gift of the Warden himself. How keen the interest of the Vicar was, only those who had the getting up of the entertainment knew. It was no mere perfunctory interest of one night only, but began with the first rehearsal and lasted right down to the last performance; nothing was too small

to consult the Vicar about; he was never too tired or too busy to help. 'He's sure to know of something,' and off would go a small boy to the Vicarage, never fearing a rebuff, but quite confident he would get whatever he wanted; and sure enough he always came back in triumph, as often as not accompanied by the Vicar himself. It was the same with the school games. A cricket-field was hard to obtain anywhere in the neighbourhood, but somehow the Vicar each year managed to secure one for certain days in the week, and was always interested in the results of the matches, and as keen as the boys themselves that the Grammar-School should win.

"It must not be thought that the school-work was only of secondary importance in his eyes—far from it. The time-table was always submitted to him each term, he looked over all the examination papers, and frequently took classes in mathematics himself.

"I have left the account of the spiritual side of the school-work to the last, because, had it not been for the feeling among all the boys that the Vicar cared for *all* their interests, it would never have been the wonderful work it was.

"Every morning the school met in the church for shortened Matins, the elder boys taking it in turn to read the lessons. On Friday mornings this was followed by an address from the Vicar. Then he spoke to the boys from his heart, earnest, straightforward talks, which they could never forget. He preferred to have the boys with him alone at such times, but I shall never forget the wonderful look of love I once saw at such a time, the impassioned tones as the words

rang down the church. 'Boys, never teach another boy wrong. Whatever you may do, never have it on your conscience you led another into sin. Never grieve our LORD by that. Look what He did for you,' and pointed to the Crucifix. The silence among those sixty-odd boys could be felt, their hearts were taken by storm; and as they knelt to receive his blessing, a light of strong resolution was to be seen in their faces. It was inspiring.

"Perhaps most beautiful of all were the Choral Celebrations which on Saints' days took the place of Matins. The choir of Holy Trinity was formed by the school, and on these occasions the Vicar was generally the Celebrant.

"Evidence of the wonderful power of his teaching may be seen in the fact that though attendance at this service was voluntary, not a boy was ever absent.

"One and all regarded it as their highest privilege to be present, and to refuse a boy permission to attend was the severest punishment. I remember well the expression of pain and disappointment on two little fellows' faces—whose parents refused to allow them to be baptized—at not being allowed to be present at these Holy Mysteries. The Real Presence was no mere question of words: it was a living Reality. Many a time have I come into the church when the Blessed Sacrament was reserved in the side chapel, to find one of the elder boys voluntarily giving up his play before school, and on being asked why he was there, the answer would be, 'I am on guard. The Blessed Sacrament is reserved to-day. I'm here to tell the other boys as they come in.' Then when the

bell rang for Matins, and the boys trooped in, the light on the Altar would be shown to them by the guard, and they knew the meaning, and without exception, without anyone to tell them, they would reverently and quietly genuflect to the Altar, to reach their usual places. Another instance may be given as showing how the Vicar conveyed his own inspiring belief to the smallest. A little chap came in rather late to the Eucharist one Saint's day. I beckoned him to come next to me, and as he knelt down came the anxious question, 'Am I too late?' Not understanding, I replied, 'Well, you are a little late, but never mind now.' 'No, no; I mean, am I too late? Has JESUS come yet?'

"In case it may be thought these were not ordinary boys, but some strange paragons of virtue, I should like to say that the same boy within a few hours received a good thrashing for trying to break his own neck, and that of another boy, by swarming all over the roof of the school; and others again admitted pouring water into the piano just before choir-practice, 'to see what "Timmy" would say,' 'Timmy' being Mr. Timothy, the organist and choir-master.

"Besides my reminiscences of the Vicar at the Grammar-School, I should like to add my tribute to his memory as my personal friend and spiritual director. Here words fail; it is impossible to describe what he was in times alike of sorrow and joy. It was the Vicar who taught me what GOD'S love really means; it was he who rescued me from a shipwrecked faith many years ago when doubts assailed. No matter how trivial the difficulty, it was never too small to take to the Vicar. Yes, that was the secret of his

winning personality : one never felt one was a bother ; one was always sure of a welcome ; one knew how he cared. His love for GOD was so great, it inspired his whole life, and overflowed to every one of GOD's children."

To one of Dr. Linklater's taste and disposition, the limitations of a parish must at times have been trying. The very sameness of the surroundings, the streets, the houses, and their inhabitants, must sometimes have palled upon one who was such an ardent lover of nature and of wild nature. Through those long years of ministry, so blessed to his parish, he could scarcely have failed sometimes to find his work irksome, the chain somewhat galling ; but would his people, his "dear people," as he loved to call them, ever have guessed that it was so ?

For some years he was a member of the Hornsey School Board, and served on the Edmonton Board of Guardians. He formed a Young Men's Gymnasium, and also started a Men's Club. Keen in providing for the needs of every side of human life, he exerted himself to promote the good and increase the joy of life for all classes of the community, established guilds, clubs, and schools, not by any means confining his labours for the general good to the area of his own immediate parish, but making his influence felt further afield.

## CHAPTER XI

### HOLIDAY HOURS

“The treasure proudly did I show  
To some whose minds without disdain  
Can turn to little things.”

FEW people are as full of genuine mirth as was Dr. Linklater, who almost to the end of his life entered into the spirit of a joke with the merriment of youth.

He possessed in fullest measure all an Irishman's sense of humour; quick-witted and clever, his love of fun urged him on to play many a “trick” upon the unsuspecting guest, and no young folks in his house could feel quite safe unless proof against practical jokes.

Children were to him a great joy; he loved animals, and was never without a pet dog. “Roy,” and little “Smut,” who survives his master and wept for him at his “passing” like a child, seemed part of the family, old friends whom one hopes some day to meet again in the sunny glades.

It used to be said of him by his friends of Wapping days that Linklater could always adapt himself to circumstances, and would be found in his rooms at the Clergy House happily entertaining a peer and a pauper, a staid parson and an ex-convict, side by side

at his table, amalgamating difficult elements with perfect ease and absolute sang-froid.

Extraordinarily hospitable, those at home knew better than to be surprised by any guest whom he might pick up on the homeward way and bring in to the next meal, as had been his practice in earlier years, before matrimony introduced an element of regularity into his habits.

Richly endowed with the "saving sense," he was capital company, and made life merry with his fund of jokes and racy anecdotes. He was a wonderfully clever caricaturist, but however strong the temptation (and to one like himself it must often have been almost irresistible), he never allowed himself to indulge in any fun at the expense of the feelings of another, and on that account in later life would hardly allow himself to exercise this gift. But it was impossible not to see how lack of humour tried him, and a less kind man would have had little patience with those devoid of the "saving sense" with which he himself was so richly endowed. "He once took me," says an old friend, "to Barnet Fair, bought a gig-whip at the entrance to the fair-field, and drew upon us pressing offers of the most impossible varieties of horseflesh. It was a vision of Donnybrook. It was a schoolboy of fifty out for a holiday."

The zealous Missioner understood the art (for some hard-working people so hard to acquire) of taking leisure to recreate, thereby refreshing his own and the drooping spirits of others. When at Landport, he was in the habit of taking a weekly afternoon off,

and, taking his guests a short run by rail, would introduce them to some Elysium he had discovered. A small hamlet on the Portsmouth Downs was one of these favourite resorts where, in a manner refreshing to witness, he would revel in the wealth of wild-flowers growing in great profusion on the chalk soil.

Those hours of freedom gave him intense pleasure, for he gloried in the delights of country scenes, so pure, and such a contrast to the noisy slums left for the time behind.

If there was any difficulty in persuading him to throw aside his work for the afternoon, his friends had but to urge that the expedition was necessary for the sake of "Pat," the dog, and they would be sure to carry their point. He might refuse the plea for himself, but not for another, even if that other was but a dumb animal.

And what joyous times those were, when in the days of youth and health at Portsmouth, and later in Dorsetshire, he delighted to act as cicerone, and planning all sorts of entrancing expeditions, he would drive you himself over hill and dale to introduce you to ideal farmhouses and picturesque villages. Black-berrying expeditions, mushroom-hunts, bathing, boating, there was no innocent form of amusement in which he failed to throw himself with the zest of a child. Half an hour after his arrival at Holworth, you would go in pursuit of the Vicar, and find him, his coat flung aside, a rush hat well at the back of his head, the wearer hot and happy, hard at work digging

potatoes, and his factotum (busy also) looking on! Was it not characteristic of both?

We might expostulate, and his wife remind him that he had left London to *rest*. It was all in vain, while the Doctor, in his element, and disporting himself at will, quoted breathlessly for the benefit of objectors the poet's lines: "But absence of occupation is not rest."

Nothing roused his ire or provoked indignation so much as any lack of kindness in conversation, and when those in his own house have been criticizing (possibly somewhat freely) the conduct of their neighbours, the Vicar has been known to turn sharply on his heel and leave the assembly. Everyone felt the silent rebuke intended, and as one of the company, a leader of fashion, on one such occasion remarked: "What a different world it would be were there more like him."

Yes. No one knew better than Robert Linklater how to administer reproof, and many can bear witness to his powers of severity. He possessed the rare but CHRIST-like gift of helping others through allowing himself to be helped, even by the youngest. What guest in his house will not remember the glad alacrity with which the call of the busy Priest was responded to, and how many of his younger guests were encouraged to make themselves useful by the cheery confidence with which he appealed to them for help! With his hands full of work, he never seemed so pressed as to be forgetful of others; his manner of doing small acts of thoughtful kindness was remark-

ably graceful; nothing was a trouble which might serve to enhance the enjoyment of one or the other, and when performing some courteous act of generosity himself, made the recipient feel as if he was behaving royally, and conferring the greatest favour in accepting it. When able to assist him in the most trivial concerns, he was so touchingly grateful that you felt humbled, and only anxious to be able to do something deserving of thanks. And there was no affectation in it—it was just his way, and spoke eloquently, showing what manner of man Robert Linklater really was. Which of the numerous young guests made so welcome to his hospitable roof does not recall the hearty call, “Come along, you’re just the one I want!” as the Priest put his head out of the study door, inviting you to come and assist him? It might be to find a book, look up a reference, write a letter for him, something you could do—to do it was a treat.

Prebendary Linklater was a delightful companion; so spontaneous and so genial, he did not lay himself out to entertain, therefore in his society you never failed to be entertained, and there was a charm about his “simplicity divine” which all his intimates must have felt, and of which none who knew him even slightly could be wholly ignorant. I remember so well on one occasion being followed, when staying at the Vicarage, by a stranger, who came up and accosted me, having caught sight of the Vicar in a crowd in the distance—“Father Linklater”—whom, as he informed me suavely, he had known “long years ago,” but since lost sight of. Could I assist him? He

was anxious to renew acquaintance. Could I run him to ground, or otherwise assist in the search?

On the Vicar's return he was of course informed of the gentleman's vain quest, of whom, needless to remark, he disclaimed all knowledge. "Perhaps he is one of your friends from America," suggested I tentatively, knowing well he had a soft corner for many there. "Anyway, he says he knows you." "To be sure," replied the Doctor with one of his merry twinkles, "but more folk know Tom Fool than Tom Fool knows."

The native wit and genial manner which made him so attractive, so deservedly popular with men of all classes, the genius of his own goodness which inspired those brought under his influence to adopt the principles of the friend who, wherever he moved, seemed to go about "doing good," the gifts and graces that made familiar intercourse and holidays with him such a delight—all these were part of the man himself, the outcome of a really generous and unselfish nature.

## CHAPTER XII

### HOLWORTH

“Vain is the glory of the sky,  
The beauty vain of field and grove,  
Unless while with admiring eye  
We gaze, we also learn to love.”

NOTHING is more refreshing than to see a busy man throw off his burden of care and the anxieties of work, and give himself up to the enjoyment of a good holiday. No one knew better than Dr. Linklater how to do this, and many like myself were able to enjoy this pleasurable experience after the acquisition of his country home. And thereby hangs a tale. It was a joke amongst his friends that Linklater had a genius for picking up bargains and bringing home treasures, which he assured us were “given away”! On a certain day memorable in the annals of the Vicarage, he announced to the astonished circle that he had just completed the purchase of a delightful surprise. “Somebody’s elephant,” suggested the mistress of the house, *sotto voce*. “I wonder what it is this time.” “A country house!” When the purchaser made this announcement his face was a study. His hearers being well trained in the matter of surprises, and quite used to practical jokes, guessed this to be one. Far from it, and as the owner unfolded the nature and

described the merits of his new possession, we understood that the matter was serious.

The brother of an old friend of his had built a good substantial house upon a beautiful spot on the Dorsetshire coast. A fine position, but for a family of high-spirited boys placed in dangerous proximity to the edge of precipitous cliff something like seven hundred feet above the sea. It was hardly to be wondered at that his wife on that account stoutly declined to take up her residence in it, whilst the disappointed owner laid his case before Dr. Linklater and besought him to find a purchaser for his property.

He could not have applied to a better person for help in his dilemma; with little delay the matter was settled, and the Vicar returned to his parish the happy possessor of his friend's white elephant.

It did seem a bold venture for a man not overburdened with wealth, and with the many demands that a large parish made upon his purse; but those who knew him best were quite aware when he completed the purchase that in his usual generous fashion he was thinking of the many he would be able to benefit, the happy holidays the country home would so easily provide for many of his parishioners, to say nothing of others. The master of the house had flung his bomb and placidly watched to see it (and his hearers) explode; the property was his, and he felt secure.

A more beautiful spot on a fine clear day it would be difficult to conceive. My first sight of it was in glorious summer sunshine, and the gorgeous scene re-

mains an unforgettable memory imprinted upon the pages of the past. The house stands magnificently overlooking Weymouth Bay and Portland Harbour, the ground wild and rugged, tumbled about with rocks, boulders, and broken fragments of cliff fallen in stormy weather from the mainland, covered with briars, rushes, and wild-flowers, the home of myriads of rabbits, and in those days forming the happy hunting-ground of "Roy," one of the dear pets bound up with life at Holworth and Stroud Green.

Well, the Vicar had broken the ice, and the next I heard of the house was an invitation to join the family in taking possession, with a postscript characteristic of the master: "Do come, and better bring your bed, or you may not find one."

Waterloo was to be the meeting-place. Dr. Linklater was there on the platform looking the picture of happiness, a bag in one hand, Roy held by a leash in the other, in a wild state of excitement, as if already scenting rabbits from afar, and tearing wildly at his collar.

With a would-be serious air the Doctor charged my family to bid me a last and long farewell, for we were bound to an unknown land, an unfurnished house! Then, midst waving of hands and laughter, we were off, and I found myself with the rest of the party surrounded by packages, books, papers, tea-baskets, and, of course, sweets, for Dr. Linklater was a sweet-tooth, and considered these luxuries part of the adjuncts of a holiday. Most of the house furniture met us at the little wayside station; some of it we passed on the

road, for we had a five-mile drive through delightfully picturesque villages across the Downs before we reached Holworth.

We had a busy time before us, but before nightfall beds had been set up, curtains were hung, packing-cases converted into tables or seats to make the pleasant rooms habitable and cosy.

Dr. Linklater had excellent taste, as those who knew his house could testify, and one of his holiday delights was to hunt up delightfully quaint old-fashioned furniture. But at this beginning of things he and his wife contented themselves with living more or less picnic fashion, and meals, the weather being propitious, were more often than not partaken of alfresco, the veranda running round the house affording a pleasant shade from sun or wind.

Very susceptible to changes of temperature so prevalent in our uncertain climate, though no slave to his comforts, he knew how to enjoy, and enable others to enjoy, ease, and a fire on chilly evenings was a treat rarely forgone.

A great variety of literature was amassed in later years at Holworth House, and it was characteristic of the generous nature of the master of the house that he was always eager to press abundance of light books of fiction not only upon his guests and tenants, but upon any chance visitors who found their way to the neighbourhood for a holiday. Always kind, he was one of those who seemed constitutionally unable to enjoy any pleasure he could not share with others.

An ardent admirer of wild nature, I shall never

forget the boyish glee with which, as he drove us from the station across the Downs on first taking possession, he drew our attention to one point after the other of interest, and dilated on the glories of the scene, and all the while his mind seemed filled with the spirit of thanksgiving. There was a breezy buoyancy about the man which seemed to act like a tonic, and invigorated many a jaded spirit. Clad in most unclerical garb, which his friends delighted to see him don, for it meant a holiday for their tired friend, however merry his mood or mundane his occupation, there could never be a doubt of that which he himself never forgot—*what* he was; and as ambassador of the King and at the first call of duty he was ever prepared.

This was illustrated by an incident which occurred the very first evening of our arrival. In the midst of much mirth and merriment, we sat finishing our evening meal, when a messenger, panting and breathless, arrived from a neighbouring farmhouse to beg Dr. Linklater to come with him at once. A boy had fallen off a hay-rick, and a pitch-fork had pierced (as it was feared) the lung. Almost before the words were out of the man's mouth the Doctor had seized his hat and was off, his long legs soon outrunning the steps of his guide. We awaited rather anxiously his return. It was getting dark, and we were growing fearful, for the height of the cliffs, the rough nature of the ground (for pathway there was none), made it unsafe going for the inexperienced pedestrian at night. Suddenly, to our surprise and delight, a searchlight blazed out

from some of the Naval ships lying in the Bay, illuminating not only the landscape, but each blade of grass, and we sighted the tall figure of the Doctor swinging up the hill. He had done his part, as he so well knew how to do, cheering the boy and the anxious relatives, though, as he told us, midst peals of merry laughter, he found when he reached the farm that he was the "wrong man." It was the Doctor of Medicine, not the Doctor of Divinity, whose services had been required. When the local practitioner arrived, however, he found the way prepared, his task made easier by the hope the Priest's visit had inspired. Sympathetic with all in suffering, and imbued with the tenderness of a really strong comforter, his visits to the sick-room were known and recognized in his London parish by the medical men for their beneficial effect upon their patients. Wherever he passed, hope and healing seemed to follow his steps.

On this occasion the patient recovered, and never forgot his kind comforter, he and his family diligently attending the weekly services then first inaugurated and held at Holworth, for the purchase of the house had no sooner been completed than Dr. Linklater applied to the Bishop of the Diocese for leave to minister in the place, and on arrival his first act was to set up his Altar in one of the rooms on the ground floor, in which he had full permission to celebrate as often as he pleased. The Oratory was far too small to accommodate the worshippers who gathered on a Sunday evening, but we were able to expand into the hall, and many an Evensong in fine weather was held

outside, where, overlooking the most magnificent stretch of country, the congregation gathered round eager to hear the Doctor pray and preach.

He would take his stand on the veranda, his wife at the piano close beside him to lead the singing. To have heard him read in his clear voice some of the well-known Bible stories which form our Sunday Lessons, to an attentive group of bluejackets and others who gladly came to these simple services, is an unforgettable memory. His manner was always the embodiment of reverence, so intensely simple.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE COUNTRY HOME

A TRUE "father to his dear people," as he loved to call them, there is much in the description given in the Biography of Father Lowder, to which Dr. Linklater largely contributed, which would be equally applicable to himself. Certainly in their religious ministrations the resemblance between the two men must have been very marked. No one could see Dr. Linklater pray, whether kneeling to make his Thanksgiving after celebrating, or leading the household devotions in his little Oratory, without learning something of what is meant by prayer; and all was so simple, so intensely real.

I can recall on one occasion when he had been entertaining a delightfully happy party of his London choir-boys and others at Holworth, when we gathered for prayers the morning of their departure, he added to the usual Office that which he said he felt quite sure they all desired to express—a short Thanksgiving for the happy holiday they had so much enjoyed.

As one looked at the bright faces of those young lads one felt it was just a lesson, simple and practical, they would never forget, something that would help them in after-life, and bring home to them the real spirit of

prayer, as he taught them to realize that "joy is the grace we say to GOD." And this was just the manner of all the pastor's teaching; he brought religion home to the simple; he made GOD'S Presence felt, His Love a great reality.

No description of Holworth would be complete without mention of the "Cottage," endeared to many on account of its associations with the designer and builder, in which numbers of his friends found a haven of rest, and, in the congenial atmosphere of the Doctor's society, restoration to health and vigour.

A clever architect himself, the Vicar availed himself of an opportunity that occurred (when the Coast-guard Station was rebuilt) to buy old material, and therewith erect a bungalow just large enough to serve as a holiday house for his wife and himself when he let the large house, from which it was separated by a plantation of pine-trees. It commands a grand view of the Bay, and, pleasantly sheltered by the Downs rising at the back, proved a delightfully cosy retreat.

One of his tenants staying at the "Cottage" to recruit weak health told me of an incident so characteristic of the Priest's kindliness of heart that I must relate it. My friend, who was being "done for" by a nice motherly woman, an old servant of the family, invited the Doctor (in the temporary absence of his wife) to allow one of his maids to take an afternoon off, and show her servant some of the beauties of the neighbourhood, which to her were all strange. Of course, the response to the suggestion was in the affirmative, but the Doctor was never one to do things

by halves. Not one but *all* his maids should take part in the expedition, which gradually extended as he produced a map of the locality and proceeded to draw out a plan, not for the afternoon, but for a good *day's* outing, and as there was much to do and see, an early start must be made. Dear, kindly heart! Brave, generous friend!

"I looked dubious," said my friend, "at these startling propositions, and thought of the Vicar's wife, all unconscious, in happy ignorance of these wild suggestions, and safe in London.

"I thought of the Doctor's meals—he then so far from strong, I none too robust myself—and with guile induced him at some pains to modify the programme."

After some discussion he gave way, acquiescing in the proposed start being fixed for midday, and gladly giving his consent to my friend's taking charge in his kitchen assisted by his factotum in the garden.

I can see him now starting off the party, having charged the happy pleasure-seekers not to return until they had partaken of a real Dorset "Lobster Tea," and surreptitiously pressing the wherewithal into their grateful but unwilling hands. It was just like him! and to crown it all he turned to my friend with his bright smile and the merriest twinkle in his eye: "Why, I thought your people had sent Mrs. M—— purposely to look after *you*, and you have gone and sent her out for the day. I shall report you, see if I don't."

So like him! So exactly showing the heart of the man whom to know was to love.

How he loved his country home! With what zest he entered into the fun of a picnic tea, or a blackberrying expedition! He never seemed to tire of the glories of the magnificent cliffs, and delighted to watch the gambols of the innumerable rabbits who made their home in them—the rabbits which, as he related with a chuckle, his Cockney boys took on first acquaintance to be mice! and the little Home children, equally inexperienced in country life, attempted to play with, mistaking the lively little animals springing around them in all directions to be kittens!

One purchase made in his later years by the Prebendary was of so original a character, and caused so much merriment to his friends and guests at Holworth, that a description of the place would scarcely be complete without mention of it—the large white object to which, if his guests failed to notice, their host invariably drew attention. For, placed in a sheltered spot on an eminence upon the cliff, commanding a view of the Bay, stood a tram-car.

How it could have been got there persons of a practical turn of mind never ceased to inquire, as they wondered at the cost of conveying such a thing across the Downs from the station. The transit of this adjunct to the property must have been considerable. But then, as the Doctor said, "It was such a bargain! The Tramway Company was selling the car. Such an opportunity might never occur again." Every guest was in turn pressed to avail themselves of the shelter afforded by the car, which still retained

the names of the places to which in other scenes it had been wont to travel. Crouch End, Hornsey, Finsbury Park—you might in fancy revisit them all as you sat on the cliffs at Holworth Bay.

But who can forget the joy of the possessor when on one occasion his tenants at the "Cottage" were able proudly to inform him not only that the car had proved most useful, but on a certain afternoon, when a tea picnic for some children of the neighbourhood had been planned, and rain came on, making the feast out of doors impossible, the car converted temporarily into a tea-room had afforded the greatest delight to the young people.

One felt, after that experience, the ingenuity and the energy of our dear old friend in completing this remarkable purchase were more than repaid.

One old friend writes of him thus: "In earlier days we met constantly, in later years circumstances kept us apart. Glimpses of him were but occasional, and letters rare; but he was one of those ever the same, always the kind, sympathetic friend. Though it might be but a few hurried lines that came to cheer you, watching at the death-bed of some dear one, reaching you in the midst of great sorrow or anxiety, and written, as you well knew, in the midst of great pressure of work, his words came bearing with them the message of his own peculiar grace and goodness, imparting strength and courage just when it was most needed."

Dr. Linklater was one of those men, strong and tender, to whom instinctively one turns in times of

special need or difficulty. Wherever his influence made itself felt, from youth to old age, Robert Linklater, never regardless of the feelings of any, seemed to impart courage and to exercise a blessed health-giving, healing ministry. He was not a man to disregard, and was most considerate in respect to personal peculiarities, and ever had respect for old-fashioned or Anglican prejudices.

An instance of this occurred quite recently after he had relinquished his cure, and was living at Holworth. When there, he was not in the habit of saying Matins publicly, but hearing that a lady, the tenant then occupying his cottage, had remarked to a friend that she never felt as if her Sunday had been spent quite right without attendance at church in the morning, although the effort at that time was to him a painful exertion, no persuasions on the part of his friends availed to induce him to forgo saying Matins in the little chapel.

Those services at Holworth, so exceedingly simple in their character, were not without fruit, and many could testify to the help and refreshment they derived from them.

However homely the surroundings, the subject or the place of prayer, Dr. Linklater, absolutely natural, reverent, and recollected, could never be anything but in simplicity sublime.

To see him prepare to celebrate, or hear him read the Bible, was in itself a lesson. One of the last occasions on which I had the privilege of attending the service was on the Sunday after the terrible disaster

of the loss of the *Titanic*. I shall never forget, and none could fail to be struck by, the tender pride with which the Preacher extolled the noble courage of some of the crew on that occasion, nor remain unmoved by the fervour with which he made his appeal, and pleaded with his hearers not to suffer themselves to neglect the warning such a calamity was calculated to bring home to all.

Something about his expression, his very attitude as he stood there on that still summer evening in the little chapel, vividly recalled his vigorous days. It was as if a flame of the old fire that made the Priest so successful a Missioner, and his appeals so irresistible, had once more leapt up.

There had always been an alert movement peculiar to him—a manner of lifting his head when preparing to speak—which somehow suggested the thought of the war-horse smelling the battle afar off.

That evening I was forcibly reminded of that which had often before struck me, as I noted the kindling eye, the upward gaze, and the *alertness* which still hung about the worn Priest.

The chapel was well filled with an attentive congregation, for it was a familiar sight to the people scattered about the Downs, as the hour of service drew near, to see the Prebendary climb the hill outside his gates, and, supported by his old Alpine stock with crook handle, without which he no longer durst attempt to walk, stand there tinkling the bell. His tall figure outlined against the sky (reminding one so forcibly of *the* Shepherd never far from his own

thoughts), as he gathered the simple people, whom he was ever ready to greet with a cheery word or kind smile, as one little group after another came trudging up the slopes.

A Sunday tea-party took place when I was there last, in honour of the baptism of the babe of one of those families, and although completely exhausted after the exertion, the Doctor, with his usual courteous grace, insisted in waiting upon the guests himself.

A friend who had been at Holworth on this occasion, on hearing the news of Dr. Linklater's death, wrote to me: "I am very glad I did see him at Holworth. I often think of the quiet Evensong there on that Sunday, with his reference to the loss of the *Titanic*, and the little congregation of bluejackets and others. Holworth will always be one of my happy memories."

## CHAPTER XIV

### RESIGNATION AND DECLINING YEARS

AFTER twenty-six years of labour with unflagging zeal the faithful Pastor felt that it would be better for the parish that a younger man should carry on the work at Stroud Green, and with that object in view he called upon the Bishop of London a year before he retired, in order to tell him that, if he could appoint a Priest who would carry on the work on the same lines, so as to avoid any break in the Church life and teaching, he desired to resign the living.

The Bishop, who much regretted his decision, agreed to his wishes, and appointed the present Vicar, the Rev. E. D. Arundell, who had been for some years senior curate at All Saints', Margaret Street, who has continued the work loyally. This was an immense comfort to the Prebendary, who used to say he felt the church and parish were safe in his hands, and that neither would suffer through his departure. It was a terrible uprooting to leave the people amongst whom he had lived and laboured for so many years, whose children he had baptized and watched grow up, and the church which he had made what it now is. But as he felt himself failing, he thought it best to pass his work on to other and more vigorous hands, though to sever himself from his old friends was a

grief which he never got over, and he felt the severance so intensely that he was unable to nerve himself to go back except on very rare occasions.

In 1886 he received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from Dublin University.

In 1907, in appreciation of the work for the Diocese accomplished by his devoted labours, the present Bishop of London, who held him in high esteem, conferred upon Dr. Linklater the dignity of Prebendary of St. Paul's.

His stall in the Cathedral was a great solace to him, for since the days of Dean Church and Canon Liddon, whom he claimed amongst the number of his best-loved friends, he had always loved St. Paul's. When in London, as long as his health allowed of it he went regularly to the daily Evensong. After his resignation he was able to do a little work, and at the request of the Archdeacon undertook duty in London parishes that were in need of help.

The Prebendary had filled an important place in North London for upwards of a quarter of a century, and as he had previously been for eleven years in the East End, he put in nearly fifty years of hard work in the London Diocese.

His early days in Hornsey were to a certain extent a time of storm, but he had lived down all opposition and retired from active work about four years before his death, leaving behind him a united people. Handsome gifts marked the parting from both the Prebendary and Mrs. Linklater, and since then a new parish hall has been erected to the late Vicar's

memory. Mrs. Linklater, too, has a lasting memorial in the home for little girls which she founded at Nelson Road, and which is now carried on by the Waifs' and Strays' Society as St. Catherine's Home, as it has now been named after her.

"Dr. Robert Linklater, Prebendary of St. Paul's," *The Times* says, "was well known as Vicar of Holy Trinity, Stroud Green, where he worked for twenty-five years, resigning about five years ago. He was born in 1840. Dr. Linklater was a High Churchman, who did not hesitate to declare his opinions with decision and tenacity. He wrote a number of books in support of his views of the Church's faith and order, and lived to be widely respected as a representative of the older Tractarianism."

"Robert Linklater felt most keenly," writes one who knew his mind, "the Romanizing tendencies of a certain section of the younger clergy, and did all he could to put it down, as may be seen by the letter reprinted from the *Church Times*, which drew forth a flood of answers. And it was gratifying to find that many were of his mind, for the letters of grateful thanks far outnumbered those of the objectors who resented his view of the inadvisability of adopting Roman customs, and were almost inclined to look askance at the man who had been ready to fight to the death for our rightful heritage, the Catholic Faith pure and simple, in this country, but who indignantly repudiated Roman doctrines or usages."

After his resignation, in 1911, the Prebendary passed a quiet life, spending the summer at his house

at Holworth. Thus the secluded villages in Dorset, the slums of Portsmouth, the poor at Wapping, and the suburban population of Stroud Green have benefited by the ministrations of this genial, kindly man, and from all these parts and many others hundreds will feel his passing as a personal loss.

In the winter months he made his home in South Kensington, celebrating, when able to do so, at St. Matthias's Church, Earl's Court, of which his old friend and former Curate at Stroud Green, the Rev. Willoughby Carter, is the Vicar. Failing powers precluded the possibility of any active work during the last year or so of his life; his strength gradually declined until, ten days before his death, a very decided loss of power proclaimed that the end was not far distant.

The Prebendary was one of those men who seemed possessed of the magic gift of the Gods—the elixir of life—who hold in their keeping the “secret of perpetual youth. “And there was a time,” says a friend who had known him upwards of forty years, “when he and old age seemed to be utterly incompatible. And though, surely enough, we had watched the weight of increasing years creeping upon him, and had seen him gradually fail, it was with something of a shock that one heard Robert Linklater had passed away.”

And it may have struck some of those who had known him for many years as something of a strange coincidence that to him, so pre-eminently an advocate for peace, such a true “peacemaker,” the call to lay

down his arms should come just at the time when half the world was convulsed by war and bloodshed, and the Church, standing on the threshold of another Lent, watched and waited with anxious care to help her sons to enter seriously upon a season the like of which many of them would never see again.

In the early hours of Ash Wednesday morning, February 17, 1915, at the time when, for the greater part of his life, the Priest had been in the habit of vesting himself in preparation for taking his place before the Throne of GOD upon earth, to plead there for himself and for his people the all-availing Sacrifice, he was summoned not to gird but to divest himself of all the trappings of his earthly tenement, and take his stand before the Throne Eternal.

Dauntless and unflinching in his struggle against evil, how often with the cross in hand had not the Priest led the assault, and bent all his energies to bring release to the captives held in bondage by the cruel tyranny, the galling chain of sin! With all the energy of conviction he had laboured from his youth to win souls to GOD, to win glory for his Master, to uphold Catholic doctrine and practice, to extend the borders of CHRIST'S Kingdom.

If ever faithful warrior earned not only his rest but his laurels, Robert Linklater surely earned his. Valiant in battle, unflinching in upholding principle, in pleading GOD'S cause, he, brave soldier of the Cross, was never weary of striving to bring peace upon earth.

May we not trust that he, whose "battle day" is done, still watches and is permitted to intercede for those

he leaves behind? That he whose great joy it was to bring this gift to "hearts distressed," struggling along on their earthly pilgrimage, may be permitted to see the fruit and reap the reward promised to those who "labour for peace," in the blessedness of the bright Garden of GOD, where may he find joy, refreshment, and rest eternal.

## CHAPTER XV

### DEATH AND BURIAL

“By our own spirits are we deified.”

THOUGH confined to his bed for a year before he died, GOD was very good to His servant, and it was weakness, not pain (from which he was quite free), that kept him a prisoner, and he never seemed other than happy and content. It was only ten days before the end that he became partially unconscious, and seemed far away. Who could doubt but that he was even then already in the Presence of the Master he loved so well and served so faithfully? The end came without a struggle—a few deep, long-drawn breaths, and the pure spirit stood untrammelled by the body, free and radiant in the Infinite Life of the Eternal. In his *Parish Magazine*, the present Vicar of Stroud Green, writing to his people of his predecessor and his work, says :

“The passing of a great man is always a time of responsibility to those who come under his influence—the passing of a faithful Priest is a time of special responsibilities to those to whom he ministered. It seemed almost providential that there was no exhortation in the February Magazine to keep Lent. The exhortation came to us from within the Veil, for

it was on Ash Wednesday morning your beloved Pastor received the Call from his Master. When you were gathered round the Altar he loved so well, and served so faithfully, at that very time his soul was passing. . . .

"We do well to ponder the message which comes to us from him.

"As I look back over his twenty-six years' ministry in this parish, and notice on all sides the beautiful results of his deep and loving work manifested in the hearts and lives of the faithful, there come to me feelings of profound gratitude and a sense of heavy responsibility. Gratitude for being allowed to carry on his work; responsibility in the attempted fulfilment. It is given to few Priests to enter upon a work so strongly established, so patiently built up. For this I cannot sufficiently express my sense of thankfulness.

"To you, his beloved Communicants, the responsibility is also very great. Many of you were baptized by him, prepared for Confirmation, First Confession, and Communion, married by him, and, in some cases, your own children have been washed at the Font by him. All of you who ever came within reach of his loving personality received some spiritual gift. Some of you who were won to the Church, and are even yet hesitating to receive all the means of grace offered in the Church, you also are kept to the Church by means of that charm of character which won you.

"If ever it is true that a strong personality lives on in the hearts of others, it is pre-eminently true of your beloved Priest. As I go in and out amongst the sick

and the whole, I feel the power of that personality. It is there. It lives. It is strong.

"The Church allows us to believe that good work begun here on earth is continued and extended beyond the Gate of Death. If this be the case generally, how much more in the case of a Priest. Those names of his flock which were written and engraved upon his heart here on earth were not erased by death; he has surely taken them with him, and while you pray that rest eternal may be granted to him, you believe that he is still praying and pleading for you.

"Father Wainright told us in his sermon that all the poor and outcast in the East End know him and speak of him as Father Linklater. It is as a loving father they like to think of him. He was above all things a father to his people, and you his children, sharers in the privileges of St. Agatha's, Landport, of St. Peter's, London Docks—you will ever show true and lasting affection and gratitude. You will persevere along the path which he himself trod, and along which he to-day, as ever, beckons you.

"To us who have followed eagerly the developments of the Catholic movement, as it is called—I mean the restoration to the Church of England of her rightful heritage—certain names have become household words. Bennett of Frome, Lowder of London Docks, Dolling of Landport—these and such names speak to us of lives of heroism and fidelity to GOD's Church and His poor. These names would be incomplete without Linklater of Stroud Green. He shared with Father Bennett in his great work at Frome; he broke up the hard ground at Landport,

and made it ready for Father Dolling; he supported and strengthened Father Lowder in those hard and difficult days; he came to Stroud Green and built up a stronghold of Catholic faith and practice. The whole Church in England owes him a deep debt of gratitude."

How can we discharge this debt but by striving with deepening love to reach after the great ideals for which he lived and in which he died?

To those privileged to receive his ministrations his death comes with a very special and direct call.

Let us lay to heart what that noble life and example means to us.

All through his life Dr. Linklater took delight in poetry and art, and it may have been partly his own love of music which made him so sympathetic for those who enjoyed taking their part in the singing, so insistent in keeping the services of his Church of a strictly congregational character. None knew better than he the value of music as an aid to devotion, nor was anyone more alive to the converting power of well-known hymns. This may have come home with special force to some of those present at his Requiem, when, gathered before the Altar of the church in which he had so often stood to celebrate, his bier in our midst, we joined in singing some of the well-known favourites which seemed instinct with his own bright, loving spirit.

It was with a full heart that on the day of his burial his friends turned from the church where many of

them had assisted at his Induction to the parish, and some could recall the stormy scenes witnessed in the early days of his incoming.

The Stroud Green *Parish Magazine* says :

“ Dr. Linklater passed to his rest on Ash Wednesday morning at 7.15. His body was brought to the church at 7.30 on Friday evening, and was placed in the Chancel with feet towards the West. His own Stole, which he had used in his ministrations here, was laid upon the Pall.

“ A large congregation assisted at Vespers of the Dead, and remained after the service in silent prayer. From nine o'clock onwards throughout the night a watch was kept by the general Communicants up to midnight, and afterwards through the night by the Wardens, Sidesmen, Church Council, Servers, and others.

“ At eleven o'clock on Saturday a Solemn Requiem was sung, at which, in the unavoidable absence of the Bishop of London, the Bishop of Willesden assisted in Cope and Mitre, and in his sermon dwelt at length upon the loving work which Father Linklater accomplished at St. Agatha's, Landport, at a time when he (the Bishop) was working in the same Diocese at Southampton. He testified to the devotion and strong personality which marked the inauguration of that work, and he exhorted the Faithful at Stroud Green to be true to the traditions which he had established in this parish.

“ The funeral service was at 1.30, when the full choir assembled. Father Wainright, Vicar of St. Peter's,

London Docks, gave an inspiring address on the life and work of his dear colleague at London Docks.

"After the singing of the Nunc Dimittis, the choir and church officers preceded the body to the West End of the church, and the wardens and sidesmen walked on either side of the bier to the parish boundary. The interment took place in the cemetery at Highgate. The service at the grave was taken by the Rev. Willoughby Carter.

"Amongst the clergy who were present and assisted at the services were the Rev. Willoughby Carter, the Rev. the Hon. H. N. Waldegrave, the Rev. Wilfrid Ogle (Rural Dean), the Rev. H. C. G. Morice, the Rev. Robert McKenny, the Rev. T. A. Lacey, the Rev. S. E. B. Serle, the Rev. H. E. Wilson, the Rev. J. H. Greaves, the Rev. Father Wainright, the Rev. H. Hughes, the Rev. C. J. Sharp, the Rev. W. H. Bashforth, the Rev. Father Tremenheere, the Rev. R. S. Marsden, and letters of regret were received from many others unable to attend.

"The Council of the English Church Union, of which Dr. Linklater was an original member, was represented by Sir John B. Riddell, Mr. Higham, and Mr. F. E. Sidney."

We felt the force of the words of his brother-Priest, the Rev. Gordon Wickham, Rector of Bradford-Abbas, who says in a letter to Mrs. Linklater: "Some of that comfort in our sorrow will be found in the love with which those who, like myself, came under his influence, and were inspired by him to do the Master's work, will follow him to the grave and will

keep fresh in memory the days in which they were permitted to be his fellow-helpers."

Friendship with such a man is an undying possession. He passes out of sight, and with him disappears the exhilarating vision of a unique personality; but he leaves behind him that which is immortal.

## CHAPTER XVI

### CONCLUSION AND AFTERGLOW

"Thrice blest are those whose lives are faithful prayers."

WE look back on such a life as that of Robert Linklater, we recall the tender sympathy which strengthened so many to bear the burden of life through the heat of the day, his loving thoughtful tact and consideration for all, his unfailing courtesy and patience, as well as his heroic labours and indefatigable energy, spent for the benefit of the souls and bodies of men. We look back, and as the chords of memory are stirred, our hearts are aglow with the recollection of the friend, so gracious in his goodness, so soothing in his seriousness, so strengthening in his sympathy.

The cultivated taste and native wit which made him so entertaining a companion, the thoughtful tact and easy, natural kindliness which made familiar intercourse with him so pleasant, the gracious and conciliatory address springing from something far deeper than any surface charm of manner, which, if they did not convert adversaries into adherents, at least prevented rancour and bitterness from springing up between opponents—these things were all part of the man himself, his individuality, the outcome of a pure and noble nature.

Human nature assumes a great variety of form and character; the mind, even the Christian mind, takes many a different shape; the saint has his faults, the strongest his weakness; so diverse are the hearts of men in all ages that even amongst the "good," in the moulding of the character after the Divine Model there arises, as to the mode, great divergence of opinion, if not positive antagonism, between those of opposite trends of thought. The human mind is too small to grasp the greatness of the Greatest; our conceptions of the "Heart of the Eternal" seem often distorted; yet though men may argue, and few will be found to agree, there is one, the prevailing, the all-pervading, feature of the Divine nature, which displayed, never fails to win admiration. The noblest are drawn to imitate, and the lowest to venerate, the beauty of unselfishness, and through the seventy-four years of his earthly pilgrimage the faithful Priest never failed to exhibit by word and example the leading feature of that Divine and All-Beautiful life, and as far as in him lay proclaimed the character of the Master he served, as One Whose Name and Whose nature is "Love."

His love of the brethren was so abiding and so strong, his life of prayer, one felt, must be deep.

A lovable Christian is the best exponent of the Gospel; a life of continuous labour, patient, unremitting toil, for the benefit of others, a good illustration of the principles of any man, the best proof of the sincerity of his convictions, and a sound argument in favour of his creed.

"For years beyond our ken  
The light he leaves behind him lies  
Upon the paths of men."

Reviewing the Priest's life as a whole, one striking feature, so it seems to me, was his indefatigable zeal in endeavouring to ameliorate the conditions of life for all or any who crossed his path, as he thus led them to see and love GOD. And his charity was as large as his patience was long.

As an Evangelist his power could not fail to be great; his character was so convincing that his words carried weight sufficient to alter the whole current of one's thought.

If it be true that Divine teaching is parabolic, life itself surely is a parable, the record of a very earthly story beneath which heavenly mysteries lay concealed; to each one is given to tell the tale in his own way, but not to everyone is it given to discern the meaning of what (though heavenly) appears so ordinary. Earth's limitations, so irritating, so irksome, so repugnant sometimes to the taste and instincts of the natural man, stone walls and iron bars, the stern unyielding facts that enclose our little life, the limitations of unalterable circumstances, which, remaining the same, may yet become changed for us when touched and transformed by the hand of a good man, a joyous spirit such as Robert Linklater, who set your feet in the path of righteousness, flung open the gates, and led you to the heights, there to catch a glimpse of the vision of the city Beautiful, where, as we may believe, the ambassador, having delivered the message with

which he had been entrusted—the message of his own life—now takes his place and enjoys rest in the Presence of the King.

There could be no uncertainty as to the message a man such as he had to deliver, and all could in the ambassador recognize something of the mind of the Master; and the life lived in the light of common day, amid the dirt and dust of sin, the turmoil and toil of this world's life, was an inspiration, an illumination.

Human nature is an instrument delicate and complex in its character, and like all fine machines requires delicacy of touch; but the tender hand, embued with reverence for all GOD'S creatures, has power to draw from a very ordinary instrument most sweet melody, and the perfection of the music depends largely on the skill of the performer. There are those of correct ear, true to sound, faultless touch, firm and "sympathique," whose aptitude in handling their instrument brings such ready response, such exquisite melody, that we describe them as endowed with genius; and men of tact and sympathy, able to deal with humanity as the musician does with his instrument, gifted with that which, springing from a Divine source, we call charity, are possessed of genius.

Instinct with this genius, the science of the saints, the secret of the wise, Robert Linklater was possessed of that magnetic force, so potent to bind men to GOD and to one another, which drew many to listen to his teaching, and made his work in the conversion of souls so fruitful.

## APPENDIX

### SERMONS AND LETTERS

THE Rev. Robert Linklater was inducted into the Vicarage of Holy Trinity, Stroud Green, by the Ven. J. A. Hersey, Archdeacon of Middlesex, in the presence of about three thousand people. The Bishop of London's mandate was read, and the usual formalities were gone through. In the evening a sermon was preached by the new Vicar, of which the following extracts are given :

“ St. John. i. 11 and 12 : ‘ He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of GOD.’

“ Consider, first, the wonderful condescension of GOD as exhibited in the text. He stoops to our low estate and lifts us up to a sort of equality with Himself. He opens His Heart to us that we may read there plainly how dearly we are loved. It is beyond the power of language to convey any adequate idea of what this means. The Creator humbling Himself to the level of the creature. The Eternal GOD lifting sinful mortals into the fellowship of His Divine Nature. Surely it would be enough, considering our relative positions, that GOD, Who made the world,

and made us that we might serve Him, should simply tell us what He wishes us to do, without telling us the reason why. It is honour enough for us to be called to do His Will. But here, not only are we told the reason why, but, far greater mystery, we are told that GOD has set His Heart upon our love, and that He has given His Life for our salvation—and it is not so much the thought that we shall suffer eternal loss if we now spurn Him, as that He will be disappointed in the yearnings of His wondrous love, which is intended to move our heart to better things. Let us try and understand how GOD thus honours us in telling us of His Love. We, even amongst our equals, do not often speak, or speak to everyone, of the things that really touch our heart. If we have any great joy, and especially if we have any sorrow, we do not speak of it to mere acquaintances, but only to our friends.

“I have invited you to these thoughts as a preface to my sermon, because I am convinced that it is the purpose of the HOLY GHOST thus to lift our hearts from the paltry surroundings of our natural life, and its selfish dwarfing interests, in order that we may reverently contemplate the purposes of Divine love, and from such an elevation take a GOD-like view of the dread conflict between good and evil in which we play our part, and rise from the dream of time into the lasting realities of Eternity.

“He came into ‘His own.’ My own! JESUS looks down on each one of you, each heart He died to save, and He whispers His appeal—‘My own!’ Oh, my brethren, let us take to our hearts the full meaning of this appeal, and in the Crucified Heart of JESUS see

how dearly we are loved. He came. Consider the manner of His coming. He, the Terrible and Mighty GOD—who shakes the earth—the All-holy and All-pure. He might have come in the indignation of His outraged and rejected Majesty to drag to judgment the puny creatures who had defied His will. He could easily have crushed us; could easily have compelled our homage. Just as all rebellion will be shattered at the awful Judgment Day. But He could not then have won our love. He yearns for our love. And so He emptied Himself of His Majesty. He clothed Himself with our humanity, He became Incarnate, one of ourselves, that He might find an entrance to our hearts. Nay, He became a helpless little child and threw Himself into the arms of the world, that He might appeal to our pity and claim our protection and our love. We might have resisted a Majesty that compelled, but what can we do with Helplessness that appeals? My brethren, in this way our Blessed LORD touched the one chord of Divine nature that was left in fallen man—the sense of pity. The one lingering spark of our native nobility. The spirit of chivalry and heroism which compels a man to have pity on the weak. I have seen this Divine sense of pity most wonderfully exhibited in the least likely cases. A great, strong, hulking savage nursing a sick child with all the tenderness and delicacy of a woman.

“My brethren, of all the broken-hearted cries that have ever rent this atmosphere of ours, surely that was the most bitter which burst from the disappointed love of JESUS, and rang through the Temple courts,

after His final rejection by the Jews, 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold your house is left unto you desolate' (St. Matt. xxiii. 37 and 38). All His love spurned. His purpose defeated. The enemy triumphant in the very citadel of His heart. The crass stupidity and obstinacy of puny men victorious over the generous self-sacrificing love of Almighty GOD. It is well for us to try and enter thus into the sorrows of the heart of JESUS. Thus we can forget ourselves. Thus we can sweep away all differences, and yield ourselves to the attraction of our common faith. Thus we can loyally put aside all personal considerations, and remember only that we are fellow-soldiers of the King, and that our swords, consecrated to fight against our common foe, must never be unsheathed against a brother. Let us remember the terrible lesson of the Crusaders, how the army of Christendom fell to pieces before the infidel because of internal jealousies and quarrels. Just as, in the days of duelling, it was high treason to draw one's sword within the precincts of the Court, so in the presence of the Majesty of GOD, and in view of all the interests of the Kingdom, we must bury our paltry little quarrels, and remember we are comrades in the great campaign.

"And I think the text as it proceeds supplies to us a *modus vivendi*—a method of peace. 'But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of GOD.' My brethren, this means that we

are absolutely lifted out of our old life into the life of GOD. We have passed from death unto life. We are new creatures in CHRIST JESUS. By virtue of our membership with the risen, glorified Body of CHRIST we have entered into heavenly places in CHRIST JESUS. And if we are risen with CHRIST we must seek those things that are above. My brothers and sisters in CHRIST, does not this supply a means whereby we can defeat the enemy who is ever seeking to cause division in our camp; and in the spirit of generous devotion to CHRIST to throw overboard our own personal grievances and dislikes, and sink our differences, whatever they may be, for the sake of the common cause? Short of this means, I do not see how those who have so bitterly resisted me can possibly forget the past. It is easier for me to say that I forgive, as I do with all the power of my heart. It is far easier for me to do this, than for them to accept my forgiveness. For they have been ungenerous. They have not even given me a chance. They have dragged my name through the mud of controversy, and have fought it out to the bitter end. They have not shown any pity. Not merely have they stabbed me to the heart, but they have pained another who has felt every blow far more acutely than I have myself. Yes, it was un-English, and it was un-Christian.

“It has been so cleverly managed by the enemy that it is almost impossible to heal the breach. Only by the wonderful compensative power of Christian love can this be done. I for my part can thank them with sincerity, for the trial has stamped my ministry here with the royal signet of the Cross. I have nothing to

forgive. And in this way of fellowship with JESUS we, both of us, can leave behind us as we pass the threshold of the Risen Life all the dust of earthly strife and turmoil. As it is written, 'We have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren.' My brethren, we must begin to do this now. For the Kingdom of GOD is within you. And we have received this wondrous power to become the sons of GOD.

"But to finish with our miserable selves. We exaggerate too much the importance of the shibolles about which we differ. And we forget the great principles of our religion which we hold in common. It is the fault of our insularity. Nothing opens a man's mind more than travelling in other countries. I quite remember what I felt when I returned from America, and saw, as one passed through this lovely land of ours, the peaceful villages all nestling round their parish churches; one breathed again, and with a grateful heart, thanked GOD, that however much we may differ in the Church, and outside the Church, at least, in England, we have this common faith, that we do believe that JESUS CHRIST is the SON OF GOD. My brethren, let us step right away from the old atmosphere of strife and debate. I, for my part, will have nothing to do with it. My business is to edify you—that is, to build you up in the LORD. My ministry has to do solely with the grace of GOD. As I hope to practise this spiritual life myself, so I invite you to share the labour with me. You will find that we shall have enough to do to develop and train these powers we have received, whereby we may become the

sons of GOD, and that we shall have neither taste nor time for controversy. If the aim and object of our life is to have JESUS in our heart, we can be very patient with those whose method of religion may seem a little different from our own."

*Part of a Letter to the Priests of the Diocese of London which was Addressed to the Editor of the "Church Times" in 1901.*

"SIR,

"I am taking upon myself, for the sake of the Church of GOD, the invidious duty of offering advice of my brother priests in the present difficulties of the Ritual crisis.

"I have no particular fitness for the office (and I abominate the duty which my conscience urges) except a long life that has been spent in intense labour for the Church, and the experience which that long life has of necessity brought with it.

"When I look back at the condition of the Church of England in the days when I first began to work for her, and her present condition at the time I write, I am filled with amazement and heart-gratitude to the good GOD Who has so wonderfully blessed our labours, and poured life into our dry bones; and, for I may as well at once announce my message, I venture to think that the calm review of our remarkable advance may well suggest to my reverend brethren that it may be wise policy, true charity, and good generalship to cry 'halt' for a time, both that we may reap the due reward of our victories in the sweeping in

to the fold of the Church the millions that are still outside her, who are only waiting to be gathered in, and also, and very specially, that we may give time for the rearguard of our vast army to catch us up, and form close order for further advance and conquest by-and-by. Otherwise the enemy will surely find our Church an easy prey—the advanced guard so very far ahead, the rear so far behind. Is not this bad generalship on our part, and are we not simply playing into the hands of the enemy? Can we wonder if we are intercepted and divided?

“As an example of the position of our stragglers, let us face the fact that only the other day a priest of the Church of England wrote in the Church papers of St. Paul’s Cathedral as an ‘Idol’s Temple,’ and another had the indelicacy to write violently about a crucifix having been placed upon our dead Queen’s breast.

“What folly to advance our ritual when we have to hurry up to our achieved position priests of our own Church who can think and write like this.

“I consider the present moment auspicious, indeed compelling, for such a review of work done and victories achieved, and a unique opportunity of forming a right judgment as to our proper course of action. I am a priest of the diocese of London. At the present moment we are without a Bishop. A good Catholic has been designated and elected to the See, but not yet enthroned. Are we going to break his heart and discourage him on his solemn entrance into his spiritual office by taking up an impossible attitude on debated questions of ritual, we who ought to be

his chief supporters and bodyguard; we who share with him the same holy faith in all fundamental Christian verities? Is this the way to receive a Catholic-minded Bishop?

"I have my own opinion about the treatment offered to our late Bishop, and its effect upon his health. I believe we took the heart out of him—broke his heart; I am tempted to say, killed him. And yet he sanctioned and championed most of the ritual points for which we have striven; and if he yielded to the Archbishop's Opinion about incense, and the Reservation of the Blessed Sacrament for the Sick, what else could he do? Did we deserve anything else? Am I not speaking that which all thought, and which moved in every Churchman's mind at the time, when I say that we were covered with shame and dismay at the feeble defence made by our side when we pleaded before the Archbishops.

"We pleaded our case, and we were beaten, and deservedly so, because our defence was so unworthy of the subject, and the least we can do is to take our defeat in silence and humility. Of course we feel deeply that we are not permitted to communicate the sick with the Reserved Sacrament. Only a parish priest with a large parish can know how impossible it makes the proper ministering to the sick and dying. If we have patience we are sure to win this great need, for even Low Churchmen cannot understand why we are forbidden such a common-sense use of the Holy Mysteries, and no one disputes the antiquity of the custom.

"Cannot we, therefore, for the sake of the present

necessity, allow these two points to remain in abeyance? Leave them for future judgment when we have united our ranks and can present a solid front, and when our priests have learned what the Blessed Sacrament is and how It ought to be treated. Surely we are not all ready yet to handle the Divine Mysteries, the Most Holy, with due and becoming reverence. A Catholic-minded Bishop said to me a long time ago, when I was deploring the infrequency of Celebrations (at that time once a month), 'I rejoice that it is so. Think of the desecration to which the Blessed Sacrament would be subjected were it otherwise, under existing circumstances.' And he was right, as I myself knew, yet GOD has spared us, in spite of all that the Incarnate Love has suffered by such indignities. Surely it proves that the Church is divine since she has survived such days. We owe many acts of reparation for such dishonour done to JESUS.

"I would, therefore, ask my brethren to consider whether it may not be GOD'S providence that for a time we should be deprived of the privilege of carrying the Blessed Sacrament to the sick, until, at least, our clergy are prepared to treat the Holy Mysteries with becoming honour. I also ask, is it right (I mean fair to our people) to carry our LORD through our streets until our people are prepared to worship as JESUS of Nazareth passeth by?

"I have been permitted by GOD to introduce the Eucharistic Vestments in no less than five parishes. And as for work, I was for eleven years curate to Father Lowder, and I have preached twenty-three

‘missions’ in different parts of England. I am thus making a fool of myself by boasting, in order to back my appeal to my brethren at the present time to have a little charity and common-sense in dealing with the ritual deadlock. It is not giving up our principles to say, ‘In view of the work that is in front of us, and in consideration of the extraordinary advance the Church of England has already made in our lifetime, and to give breathing-time to our lagging brethren, and an opportunity to catch us up, we will put upon ourselves the self-denying ordinance and discontinue for a time these two ritual practices, although they are true Catholic practices, and, therefore, part of our heritage as the Catholic Church of this country.’

“I think we shall be thus doing what is right in the sight of GOD—and we shall disarm the prejudice and opposition of those who are against us—and we shall commend our cause to the great body of fair-minded Englishmen, who love to see fair-play, and who can value self-sacrifice and self-restraint. And it will give our Ritualists a little time for work. It makes one sick to think of the number of young priests who live in the midst of teeming multitudes of people—their flock, for whose souls CHRIST died, and for whom they will have to give account—whose minds are so filled with the ritual exigencies of their position that they have no time to go out into the streets to win their people to CHRIST; who even dare to say that a priest ought not to visit, but to wait in his confessional until the mob pours in to him!

“The zealous spirits have mostly followed certain great men who for a time posed as English priests,

but who have now renounced their Orders, and are numbered in the army of our foes. It is small satisfaction to be told now, 'Ah! poor So-and-So, I always knew he would go over to Rome.' Yes, but these men celebrated at our altars, consecrated the Blessed Sacrament (which they now deny); taught their people to worship our LORD present in the Blessed Sacrament (and they will now say they worshipped only bread); absolved their penitents (and they will now say they had no power)—and yet we are fools enough to go on being deceived or misled by men of this character, and to risk our English Church and our English people because we are silly enough to follow the advice of such counsellors as these.

"The worthy priest who let in Kensit upon the Church by his extravagant Good Friday services hardly understands that he is responsible for this 'Opinion,' and, because of his want of judgment and consideration, we have lost our right to communicate the sick with the Reserved Sacrament. It is time to speak out, and I, for one, say that I am not going to help to wreck the Church of England for such advisers as these.

"I most humbly ask pardon of my reverend brethren for venturing to address them at all. I wish the duty had fallen upon worthier shoulders. It could not have fallen upon one who loves the Catholic Church of this land more passionately than the writer.

"I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

"ROBERT LINKLATER."

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